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The other side of the door

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THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR



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# The Other Side of the Door

✓ By  
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With Introduction by  
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in America



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*Dedicated to  
my four children,  
Florence, Tanzin,  
William and Whitford*



## INTRODUCTION

R. CARTER long since established his ministry in New York City and elsewhere by virtue of its vigour, versatility, wide range of interests, and zealous advocacy of the Kingdom and Gospel of our blessed Lord.

The sermons appearing in this volume manifest the preacher's qualities, his methods of thought and speech, his solicitude for the spiritual betterment of his fellow-men. He rightly emphasizes the soul's regeneration as the centre of permanent social good, and relates that good in all its manifold forms to the unchanging Christ who is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

The sidelights cast upon Biblical history and its characters, or upon the diversified sceneries of man's religious development, add to the stimulus and profit of this series of discourses. I recommend them as typical of the preaching which has earned and secured appreciation from those who have heard Dr. Carter, not only in his own pulpit,

but in many other places of importance, and "on the air."


May God's blessing attend His servant's efforts to complete his allotted tale of work while it is yet day.

S. PARKES CADMAN.

*Central Congregational Church,  
Brooklyn, N. Y.*



## FOREWORD

HE genesis of this volume lies in the foolishness of friends. During the past ten years of my pastorate in Brooklyn sermons of mine have been appearing frequently in *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, which in its "Monday sermon edition" has a world-wide circulation. Letters have come from as far away as England, on the one side of the world, and China, on the other, saying the writers had seen my sermons in the *Eagle* and wanting to know if these would not be put into book form, in order that they might be preserved in a permanent way.

Then, too, I have given many of the sermons over the radio, and similar requests have come for permanently bound copies. Indeed, practically all of the sermons in the present volume have appeared in the *Eagle*, in some other of the New York papers, or in *The Homiletic Review* or other religious journals.

It is because of such requests that I have gathered the sermons together and put them out in this way. I trust that the volume will appeal to young and old, to men and women, and to all who need the stimulus of the Gospel amid their varied perplexities.

My very sincere thanks are most gladly given to Dr. S. Parkes Cadman, my neighbour and very dear friend during many years, for his Introduction. I trust he will forgive my using his name in one of the sermons which I preached over the radio immediately before his regular Sunday afternoon Y. M. C. A. address.

WILLIAM CARTER.

*Brooklyn, N. Y.*

## CONTENTS

I.	THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR . . . .	11
	<i>Revelation 3:20.</i>	
II.	ONCE UPON A TIME . . . . .	25
	<i>Matthew 2:1.</i>	
III.	THE PERSONALITY OF JESUS AS A PROOF OF THE CHRIST . . . . .	40
	<i>Matthew 22:42.</i>	
IV.	ATONING LOVE . . . . .	55
	<i>I Corinthians 15:3.</i>	
V.	SOME MILESTONES ON THE WAY TO GOD .	67
	<i>Job 23:3; Isaiah 35:8.</i>	
VI.	TADMOR IN THE WILDERNESS . . . .	76
	<i>I Kings 9:17, 18.</i>	
VII.	THE PROFIT OF PRAYER . . . . .	93
	<i>Job 21:15.</i>	
VIII.	TURNING ONE'S FOOT FROM THE SABBATH .	106
	<i>Isaiah 58:13, 14.</i>	
IX.	WHEN I BECAME A MAN . . . . .	121
	<i>I Corinthians 13:11.</i>	
X.	YOUNG ABSALOM . . . . .	134
	<i>II Samuel 18:32.</i>	
XI.	QUIT YOU LIKE MEN . . . . .	143
	<i>I Corinthians 16:13.</i>	
XII.	WOMAN'S SPHERE . . . . .	154
	<i>Mark 14:8.</i>	
XIII.	THE PILLARS OF THE EARTH . . . .	163
	<i>I Samuel 2:8.</i>	
XIV.	A CHANCE FOR EVERY ONE . . . . .	175
	<i>I Kings 20:14.</i>	





## I

### THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR

*"Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with me."*—Revelation 3:20.



HOLMAN HUNT, the great painter, has given us a very graphic picture of this deeply moving scene. He shows us the majestic figure of the thorn-crowned Christ standing with uplifted hand knocking outside a fast closed door. It is night time. Loneliness and darkness are all around save for the rays from that lantern which this Heavenly Visitant carries in His other hand and which gives forth the Light of the Word, the Way and the World. No one stands beside Him. No one answers from within. His face is sad, His attitude one of patient, determined waiting as if, though unwelcome, He cannot easily be put off.

Yes, we have all seen that picture and it has stirred us to the soul as we have gazed upon it, but how many of us have thought of the picture on the other side of the door? We know there is someone there, else the Master would not be knocking. We all know He expects answer, else

He would not be calling His message so persistently. Why do they not answer? What are they doing on the other side of the door? The Master will not enter unless He is personally invited, but we are not so particular. We know the ways of the world and know how to get in, even though uninvited. If the front door is barred, we know that the back door will be unlatched, for the initiated. Let us get on the other side of the door, then, and see what is going on within.

As we enter, we find a large, brilliantly lighted and luxuriously furnished room. It is filled with a miscellaneous crowd. Some are young; some are old; some are grave, but most of them are hilariously and boisterously gay,—as though to veil their sorrows and mask their anxieties and fretting cares. Small tables are scattered here and there at which many are gambling and drinking. A space has been cleared in the centre in which others are dancing. At the end of the room a large refreshment table is spread where still others are eating and drinking, singing coarse songs and talking in between with those who seem to be the hosts of the occasion.

It is these hosts and some of their special guests that claim our particular attention. At the centre of the table is a young man who seems to be chief of the revels and the main host of the party. He is flushed of face, unsteady of figure and strident of voice and is addressed by the younger element

as "Anyman." At his right is one older, but just as gay and jovial, who seems to have only admiration, fascination and delight for all the younger man does and whom the guests familiarly call "Father Indulgence." At Anyman's left is a woman of mature years, of handsome yet careworn face, who is from time to time expostulating with Anyman and Father Indulgence, and whom the guests, with much deference and attention, call "Mother Anxiety."

About that table and in other parts of the room there are some guests that demand more than a passing glance. One near Anyman is called "Miss ~~Lightlove~~ <sup>*Lightlove*</sup>." Another not far away is called "Miss ~~Gaiety~~ <sup>*Gaiety*</sup>." In a corner, a young man and young woman of more formal bearing are talking quietly together, and as their companions call to them from time to time we find that their names are "Mr. Someman" and "Miss Felicity." Over by a gambling-table another couple are laughing and talking together. The man is dashing in appearance, well dressed, careless and debonair. The woman is overdressed (or under-dressed), ingratiating, insinuating and alluring. As one and another call to them we hear them called "Miss ~~Siren~~ <sup>*Scandal*</sup>" and "Mr. Everyman."

The revel is at its height as we enter. We know not what has been the reaction to those repeated knocks before, but just as our eyes become accustomed to the scene that insistent knocking comes

again and we hear the voice of the Divine Visitant crying: "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If Anyman hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with me."

There is an awed, strained silence after that knocking and the message of that Voice. The guests look at one another in fear and dismay. The glass in Anyman's hand trembles; the flush on his face pales and even Father Indulgence looks worried and distraught. Mother Anxiety is looking hopefully into her son's face and is plucking anxiously at his sleeve, to draw his attention, when Everyman, over by the gambling-table, breaks the strain by calling out jovially: "Why, Anyman, he is calling for you! He seems to know the host of this party all right! Better ask him, though, if he has an invitation. Tell him none but the invited, or initiated, are welcome here! "

A raucous laugh greets this sally. Miss <sup>Scandal</sup>Siren looks archly up into the face of Everyman as if he were a demigod and as if omniscience had spoken! Miss <sup>foolish way</sup>Lightolove and Miss <sup>Gossip</sup>Gaiety giggle in their high treble voices as if Everyman were a humourist *par excellence*! Father Indulgence turns to slap Anyman on the back and cries facetiously: "On with the Dance! Let Joy be unconfined! " but before the crowd can shake off the grip of that message from outside, Someman comes forward and, seizing Anyman by the arm, cries: "Don't!



Don't, for God's sake, let that message go by! He is indeed calling for you! Why shouldn't He come in with us? Open the door, Anyman! Let the Stranger in! He may make us better and, God knows, we need it! "

Anyman's face is a study of conflicting emotions. Miss Felicity comes forward also to plead. Others shout: "No! We don't want Him! He may spoil the party! Keep the door shut! " His mother is pleading, too. Her tears are falling down her anxious, careworn face as she cries: "You know, my son, how often I have urged you to open the door before. Don't turn Him away, now! He may never come again! Oh! for your mother's sake, open to this other Guest that you may see at least what He is like and what He may be able to do for us! " He seems about to yield, but Father Indulgence shakes him playfully as he shouts: "Some other time, son! Some other time! Tell Him to come when things are more convenient and you will let Him in! "

That settles it! Anyman looks up into Indulgence's face and throws off the spell with a laugh. "Yes, you are right, Father Indulgence," he cries. "Some other time will do! " but just as he is turning to cry out this message to the Visitant, Some-man steps forward determinedly and says: "If you won't let Him in, then I will go out to Him myself! I will not have Him turned away without someone to greet Him and show Him some atten-

tion and respect! ” And as he starts for the door, Felicity cries: “ I am going, too! He deserves this much at least from us all! ” and out she goes with Someman to the Stranger who is waiting for some one to answer to His message.

Thank God that *some* man responded to that call! Thank God a woman, too, had the courage of her convictions and followed him! Ah, Anyman, Everyman,—and women, too,—how much better is it to listen to a mother’s pleadings! Fathers, how are you indulging your sons and daughters? What care are you taking of their welfare? What example are you setting them of the need of paying some attention to the things of God? Mothers, keep pleading and praying for your sons and daughters, and pray God also that your husbands will set the right example and help you lead your children! Don’t lose your faith, Mother Anxiety! If you keep on praying your son will be saved yet,—though as by fire!

The years pass by and I see the Stranger at Anyman’s door again. It is a more prosperous looking house, even than his father’s. Anyman has prospered, but—he still needs God! The more a man prospers, indeed, the more he needs God. And so the Stranger is again knocking at Anyman’s door and giving the same message as before, but still there is no answer. Are his mother’s prayers and pleadings to be in vain? Why does he not answer the Master, now? Let

us again get on the other side of the door and find out what is going on there.

This is not the midnight hour as before. It is evening and the table is set for the evening meal. Guests are here again, but not in the same crowd as before. Anyman is at the head of the table and at its foot sits one who looks like Gaiety, but much mellowed and softened by time. Anyman is not a really awful sinner, he is just *any* man that slips along in the easiest way of the world. He has not yielded to its heinous sins, but just trifled, paltered, faltered with his great opportunities for moral and spiritual development and always chosen—just the easiest way. He has not married Miss Lightlove nor Miss Siren with all their blandishments, but has taken Miss Gaiety for his wife, and they have had a happy-go-lucky time together. “Eat, drink and be merry” has been their motto. They have skated on the thin edge of things and yet kept their reputation before the world. They have a daughter, now grown to young womanhood, and they have called her “Vivacity.”

On each side of the table there are seated two figures which look familiar; they are Someman and Felicity, who went out together to meet the Master and joined their lives in holy wedlock to do the will of God. By their sides are sitting their children:—a young man whom they call “Christian,” and two young girls whom they call “Faith” and “Charity.” Christian is sitting next to Vi-

vacuity and paying much attention to her in his grave, quiet way. Faith and Charity pay little attention to anyone or anything, save the food before them.

Their elders are talking about the old days, and especially about that midnight carousal that made such a deep impression upon their lives. "Have you had many visits from the Stranger since that night, Anyman?" asks his old friend. "No, not many," says his host. "It seems as though He got discouraged after that night. He came once just before mother died, but I put Him off again. And then when father met that terrible accident that took him off, the Stranger called again, but even that warning of my father's awful end failed to move me, and I acted on his old-time advice. I said: 'Not now! Some other time!' and He left me as before. Then once when Vivacity was sick and it seemed as though she was to be taken, He came knocking, knocking, and it seemed as though I must let Him in, but I was too proud to let Him see my grief and acknowledge my need of Him, so I simply closed my ears to His knocking and fought it out in the same old way. I doubt whether He will ever come again."

"Oh, don't say that, husband," cried out his wife. "I will never forgive myself for not making you open the door the last time He called. It seemed as though I had never needed Him so much. ~~Gaiety~~ is all right, and gay friends in their

*Gaiety*  
*Concup*

place, but they never satisfy when trouble comes; they are never any comfort then, and always leave you to yourself. I do hope He calls again and that you will let Him in so that Vivacity and I may get to know Him."

"Yes, father," calls out Vivacity, "I'm getting tired of seeing no one but these gay people and having nothing but a frivolous time with them. I've been hearing much about this Stranger from Christian here, and also from Strongheart, the son of Everyman, and other young fellows, and I want to meet Him and know Him as they do."

"There you are, Anyman!" cries Christian's mother. "Thank God the children are sometimes better than their parents. Our children seem to have more sense than we had at their age! Why don't you listen to what Vivacity says?"

"Well," replied her father, "I can say reverently, I, too, thank God that these children of ours are better than their parents. I don't know what has come over Vivacity of late. She even calls her mother, 'Mother Amiable,' though you know, and she knows, that her name is ~~Gaiety~~ <sup>Gaiety</sup>."

"No, father, not now!" cries Vivacity. "Ever since that sickness of mine she has been Mother Amiable. That changed her, and it was she who told me first about the Stranger, at that time, and the way He had been trying to get you to let Him in. I do hope you will open the door if He ever calls again, Daddy!"

Just then, as if in answer to her thought, there came that low, insistent knocking at the door and the voice of the Stranger crying: "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If Anyman hear my voice and open the door I will come in to him and sup with him and he with me! "

"Thank God! " cries Someman, "He has come again! Now is the accepted time, Anyman! He is calling again for you. Don't let the opportunity pass this time! Listen to your wife and daughter! Open the door! Invite Him in and make the family circle complete! "

"Yes, do, husband! " "Do, father! " "Do! Do! oh, do! " cries everyone. But Anyman sits there with ashen face and says with deep emotion: "I can't! I can't! It isn't the old life of gaiety that has me now, it's business! I might let Him in here, but I can't let Him in my business! It might ruin me! I can't, I tell you! I can't! "

"Why, Anyman! " cries his friend, "it hasn't ruined my business! You may have more than I have, but my investments are safer and I am not worried nearly as much as you about things. The Master can be taken as safely into business as into the home, and He wants to be in both places with you! You need Him there as well as here. Let the Master in and see if you are not all the better for it! "

But *any* man is apt to love his business better than his Lord if he lets his natural desires rule,



and those worldly desires are still ruling in Anyman, so he says: "No!" to the Master again, though his wife pleads and his daughter weeps and his friends try to persuade. "Go Thy way for this time!" he cries. "The time is not right! My business is not right. I can't invite you into it! Some other time! Some other time!" And Anyman sits cowering there while his wife and daughter, and his friend's children troop out to meet the Master, crying: "We must see Him! We must meet Him! even if you will not open the door!"

Ah, any man, how long are you going to refuse Him? How long are you going to be a Stranger to Him while your wife, your children and your friends run to meet Him and do Him homage? Time is passing! Opportunity is passing! Choose you this day whom ye will serve, whether it be God or Mammon!

And still the years pass on. I see the door of Anyman again. The Stranger is again outside. His hand is upraised, but—it is not knocking! What is going on now on the other side of the door? Go in again with me by the old route, for we must not disturb that Stranger at the door. Anyman has grown grey and decrepit with age. In place of the ruddy features, the skin is now dried like parchment and drawn tightly over the emaciated face. Others are there with him still, but some are gone. Mother Amiable has gone to

her reward, but Someman is still with his old friend, though he, too, has lost his wife, Felicity. The children are there, too, and their children. Vivacity has married Christian, and Faith and Charity have married Strongheart and Resolution, the sons of Everyman. Their children are playing around their parents:—Hope and Constance, with Faithful, the grandson of Anyman.

Look at that grandfather now! He is anxious, worried and fretful. Old age has not changed his characteristics, but they are mellowed and softened by the experiences through which he has passed. He is sitting as close to the door as possible, wrapped in blankets, propped with pillows, for with his old imperiousness he will not lie down though so feeble. He is waiting for someone. He looks anxiously at the door from time to time and bids the children hush their noises that he may hear the better what is going on outside. He does not know that the Stranger is out there. He does not know that He has been waiting there for many weary years. He only knows he wants Him, needs Him, but he does not know how to call for Him.

“Oh! if He would only come! If He would only come!” he keeps on repeating. Then he turns querulously to his friend, Someman, and cries: “Why doesn’t He come?” and his friend replies: “Perhaps you have not asked for Him? You are only wanting Him to come, but you have not asked Him, you have not cried out to Him per-

sonally." "But I'm such a sinner! I'm not worthy! I'm afraid to call for fear He will refuse me!" And Someman replies: "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." "Ask and ye shall receive!" "Seek and ye shall find!"

Then there bursts out a great cry from Anyman's burdened soul: "God be merciful to me a sinner! Come into my heart, Lord Jesus, come, and pardon all my sins!"

"Listen!" cries the little child, Hope, "I hear someone knocking on the door!" and in the hush that follows there comes the voice of the Son of God, crying: "It is I, be not afraid! If Anyman hear my voice and open the door I will come in to him and sup with him, and he with me!" The old man rises with a glad cry, totters to the door and flings it wide. Then he sees the benign figure of the Christ with His thorn-crowned brow, bows in reverence and humility as the Master crosses the threshold, but his strength gives out and he falls fainting into the Saviour's arms. Tenderly the Master lifts him and bears him to his bed. Softly He goes to the table and takes the bread and the wine that are left there and brings it to the bedside. Anyman has revived, but is fast sinking into what shall be his last sleep. The Saviour bows in prayer over the simple elements, breaks the bread and gives it to the dying man, saying: "This is my body which is broken for you. Take, eat. This do in remembrance of me." He takes the cup also,

after He has supped, and gives it to Anyman, saying: "This cup is the New Testament—the New Covenant—in my blood. Drink ye of it. For as oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do show forth the Lord's death, till he come." And the old man eats and drinks with his Master, and crying: "Lord, I believe! Help thou my unbelief!" falls back with that as his last, expiring cry, but not before he hears his Lord saying softly: "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise!"

Saved? Yes, though as by fire! Oh, any man, why wilt thou put off this great decision until thou hast nothing to offer to thy Lord but the dust of thy life? Why wilt thou wait thus long to call upon thy Saviour and then blow the snuff of the burned out candle of thy life into His dear face? Saved? Yes, though as by fire! Oh, any man, every man! Oh, young and old, grave and gay, why put off until tomorrow that which the Lord wants you to do to-day? Give Him your health, your strength and vigour, instead of the tag ends of a misspent life! Hear Him now as He cries: "Behold I stand at the door and knock!" Answer that cry now, before it is too late! Fling open wide the door of your hearts as you gladly answer: "Dear Saviour, enter, enter, and leave me nevermore!"

## II

### ONCE UPON A TIME

*"Now when Jesus was born in Judea, in the days of Herod the king."—Matthew 2:1.*

**T**HERE never yet was a story destined to thrill its way deep into the heart and life of childhood, as well as maturity, but that started with that childhood phrase, "Once upon a time," either expressed or implied. Christmas is the festival of the child, it is the crown, the glory, the apotheosis of childhood. Small wonder it is, then, that the Christmas story starts out with the implication of that same phrase. Take the "now when" of the text and translate it liberally and you have "once upon a time." The text thus translated can then be freely read: "Once upon a time there was a baby named Jesus, born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King."

At Christmas time we are all children. There is a romance, a mystery, an expectation about the whole festival that thrills even the most mature. We not only like to fool the children but we like to be fooled ourselves! We wonder what we are going to get, who is going to give it to us, when it



will come, whether we will like it, and sit enthralled by the Christmas stories others are telling the children, listening with as much delight as the children themselves. Let us, then, in the same spirit listen to the greatest Christmas story ever told, or at least the prologue of it, under that mystically thrilling caption, "Once Upon a Time."

"Once upon a time," though attributed to childhood, is not childish by any means. "Once upon a time" is deeply philosophical, profoundly artistic and significantly historical. It furnishes background, distance and perspective. It prepares the mind psychologically for romance, mystery, glamour. It carries us back from the humdrum to knights and ladies of high degree, to princes and princesses, to feudal castles and baronial halls, to hair-breadth escapes from death, to deliverances from tyranny and oppression, to the triumph of right, the defeat of wrong and all those deeds of chivalry that thrill the heart and soul of childhood and maturity alike.

"Once upon a time!" Ah, the magic of it! the beauty of it! the meaning of it all! It is only this "Once upon a time" we need consider this morning. The story itself is so well known that it needs no reiteration here. But the prologue, the background here, the perspective—that furnishes the *raison d'être* of the story—needs most careful emphasis, as by that we shall see, in the Providence of God, why it was necessary for Christ to be born

in this particular "once upon a time;" why the Roman State, in this period, was best fitted for the promulgation of Christianity, and why the Jewish people were then best adapted for its dissemination.

"Once upon a time!" Ah, how far back that carries us to find out why the Jews had lost their kingdom, why Rome held them in their power, why "Jesus was born in the days of Herod the King!" You must go back, for the beginning of the story, to 721 B. C., when Samaria fell before Shalmaneser and Sargon, and the northern Kingdom of Israel was demolished by the Assyrians, as the ten tribes were carried into captivity and forever lost. You must go to the year 606 B. C., when Nebuchadnezzar finishes what Sennacherib had begun, destroys the southern Kingdom of Judah and carries the Jews into captivity in Babylon.

Sixty-eight years pass, while "by the rivers of Babylon" the Jews "sat down and wept when they remembered Zion." Then came that night of Belshazzar's feast, in 538 B. C., when the handwriting on the wall marked Belshazzar's doom and the Babylonian kingdom passed to Cyrus the Persian, with "Darius the Median" reigning in his stead. Two years afterwards, when the seventy years of their captivity were ended, the Jews are permitted, by the decree of Cyrus, to go back to their own land, and there they abide under the easy yoke of Persia for 208 years, until, at the Battle of Arbela, in 330 B. C., Alexander the Great, that Jovian

Greek, wrests the power from Persia and lays Palestine and the whole East under his dominion.

Now mark how the purple thread of history is showing its fateful line and proving how God makes the wrath of man to praise Him. Alexander dies in 323, his kingdom is divided between his generals. Nicator takes Syria and Palestine, Ptolemy, called "Soter," or Saviour, takes Egypt. The latter insists upon a joint rule of Palestine and Egypt, which lasts 148 years, until Antiochus "Epiphanes," or "The Illustrious," as he called himself, though called by others "Epinanes," or "The Madman," wrested the power from Egypt and held Palestine under his own power.

During all these years, however, the Jews had been learning a world language and absorbing a world culture. Ptolemy II. had ordered the Old Testament translated into Greek, and the Septuagint version was the result. The Jews were reading Greek, writing Greek, speaking Greek. The way was being prepared for the writing of the New Testament in Greek, which was then a world language, and thus the world was being prepared for "The Coming of the King."

Then came the Maccabees!—determined to free Israel from the power of its oppressors. Mattathias and his greater sons: John, Simon, Judas, Eleazer, Jonathan, all pass across the stage of history and do such deeds as make the whole world to wonder.

Nowhere in all history is there a finer page than this of the Maccabean struggle for independence. It was a struggle for religious as well as civil liberty—a struggle against usurpation of conscience and the earliest manifestations by a nation of the right to worship God according to the dictates of their conscience. Well were they named the “Hammerers!” Charles, who drove back the Saracens at Tours, in 732, from overrunning northern Europe, was named “Martel,” or “The Hammer,” after them. Edward I., after his defeat of Wallace, in 1298, was called “Malleus Scotorum,” “The Hammer of the Scots,” after them. And we in America, founded in the search for the worship of God according to the dictates of our own conscience, have “followed in their train!”

John Hyrcanus, son of Simon, succeeds in the line of the Maccabees, in 135 B. C. He subjugates the Edomites, takes Samaria and occupies Galilee. John dies in 107 B. C., and leaves the throne to his son, Aristobulus. The power of the Maccabees is waning, however. A new power is rising in the West; that power is Rome. Macedonia fell before it in 197 B. C., Carthage in 146 B. C., and Simon had been obliged to ask for its protection, in 141, against the kings of Syria and Egypt. By 86 B. C. Greece is entirely subjugated to Rome, under the victories of Sulla, and Palestine falls to the share of this new world power, as Alexander Jannæus suc-

ceeds Aristobulus, and Alexandra, his widow, comes after him. Dying in 70 B. C., the kingdom is left to Hyrcanus, her eldest son, but is usurped by Aristobulus, his younger brother, and the dispute is referred by them to Pompey, chief of the First Triumvirate of Rome, with Crassus and Cæsar as his co-partners. Hyrcanus has an Idumean by his side, Antipater the Edomite, descendant not of Jacob, but of Esau. Mark that man well, for from him comes Herod, "King of the Jews! "

It is the year 63 B. C., the "Annus Mirabilis" of the Roman world, the "marvellous year" of world history. It is the year of the birth of Octavius, destined to be that Cæsar Augustus who ruled "when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King." It is the year when Herod's father comes with power and paves the way for his greater son who is born the year that follows. It is the year when Cataline is plotting his conspiracies in Rome and Cicero is thundering against them. And it is the year when Antipater, father of Herod, is plotting his conspiracies to upset the Maccabean kingdom and take the power of Palestine from the Jews for the outlawed and ostracised Edomites—with no one to thunder against him or say him nay!

Pompey decides for Hyrcanus and Antipater. Aristobulus calls his followers to arms and makes futile war against the conquering Roman. Pompey



destroys them with great slaughter and, storming Jerusalem, overthrows the city, takes the temple and, heathen Roman though he is, dares to penetrate to the very Holy of Holies to learn the mystery of the unknown and unseen God of the Jews. He is surprised to find nothing there, no statue, no image, no idol or object of worship of any sort! It is the first time the Romans have been brought into contact with the worship of the unseen, the invisible! Pompey is visibly affected. Rome gets its first lesson of a pure, spiritual worship, the last of which is to be given when Constantine sees the flaming cross in the sky and turns the Roman empire over to Christianity and God!

Aristobulus is taken a prisoner to Rome, Hyrcanus is established as high priest, but his kingly office is taken from him, his civil power being administered under the title of Ethnarch. Mark this, however, Antipater the Edomite and Idumean, is the power behind the throne, and the way is being rapidly paved for a son of Esau, rather than a son of Jacob, to be placed upon David's throne and, though not a Jew, be called by the proud title, "King of the Jews."

Now Rome is torn by internal war. Julius Cæsar has become so great that Pompey is madly jealous. He orders him not to cross the Rubicon into Italy from Gaul, where he has made such conquests. Cæsar defies him, crosses the Rubicon into Italy, wins against Pompey in many battles

and finally, at Pharsalia, in 48 B. C., decisively conquers him. Then Cæsar grows so powerful as to rouse the wrath of Brutus, Cassius, Cimba and the rest. He is murdered on the Ides of March, 44 B. C., by these conspirators, and Mark Anthony takes issue against them with the young Octavius, Cæsar's rightful heir. The verdict is given on the field of Phillippi as the conspirators are conquered and Anthony and Octavius reign supreme. Then Anthony dallies in the lap of Cleopatra, the sorceress of the Nile, and loses the confidence of Octavius by his dalliance. Recalled to Rome time after time, Anthony refuses the mandate and Octavius at last, joining issue with him at the battle of Actium, wins the victory and is established in supreme power.

What have Hyrcanus and Antipater been doing meanwhile? Turning from side to side, trying to pick the conqueror but guessing wrong, yet always the Idumean finds a way and keeps right side up in the graces of Rome. Being for Pompey in his struggle against Cæsar, they were on the losing side. Antigonus, one of the sons of Aristobulus, who had called himself by his great-grandfather's name, Mattathias, felt that this would be a good time to overthrow his uncle, Hyrcanus, and outwit the wily Antipater as the power behind the throne. Antipater anticipates him, however; he fights so loyally for Cæsar in his Egyptian campaign that he completely wins his confidence and is allowed to

remain in power with Hyrcanus, being made, indeed, Procurator of Judea for his aid and loyalty. Then the poisoner's cup does its deadly work, by the hands of an enemy, and Antipater makes room for his greater son, Herod.

Mark well this man, for he is destined for world-wide fame, through his connection with the coming of the Christ King. He is of magnificent presence, skilled in all martial and manly exercise, of marvellous strength and courage, of wonderful administrative ability, of versatile genius, so recognized, even in youth, that as a lad of fifteen he is made Governor of Galilee. All in all, he is in presence a most kingly man, in ability a man born to rule, in heart a tyrant, in action a butcher, in character a brute.

Like his father, Antipater, he chooses the wrong side in the struggle of Brutus and Cassius against Mark Antony and Octavius, but, like his father, he seizes the dilemma by the horns and conquers his mistake. After the victory at Phillippi he hastens to the victors, assures them of his loyalty being all theirs now, wins over the impressionable Antony and returns to Palestine with the approval of the world's two masters upon his plans.

Antigonus has not been idle, however. He has called the Parthians to his aid, devastated Palestine, conquered Phasaël, the brother of Herod, who in despair dies by his own hand. He has deposed his uncle, Hyrcanus, from the priesthood, mutilated

him so that he could not serve again, and sent him, a prisoner of the Parthians, to Babylon. Then it is that Herod shows again the wiliness of his father. He escapes from Palestine, takes with him Aristobulus III. and Mariamne, the son and daughter of Alexander, the executed brother of Antigonius, or Mattathias, and gains more than he had hoped. He went to plead for the Maccabean children of Alexander as the rightful heirs to the throne of their fathers—he gains the throne for himself! Anthony is not willing to give the throne of Jewry to an unknown boy, but he is willing to give it to his friend Herod, who has already made such history and given such proof of his administrative ability as Governor of Galilee. And so Anthony sets the crown of David upon the brow of this Idumean and Edomite usurper and he goes back to Palestine crowned as “King of the Jews.”

To join himself with the house and lineage of David he marries Mariamne, the Maccabean, but he could not make himself a Jew! Though called “King of the Jews,” he was always a rank outsider, holding his position only by the power of Rome. Hated by the Jews, ostracized and scorned by them, no wonder he lived in such suspicion and doubt. Holding his office by such tenuous yet forceful means, no wonder he was filled with fear and anger and hate when the Wise Men came from the East, crying, “Where is he that is born ‘King

of the Jews,' for we have seen his star in the East and are come to worship him? "

" King of the Jews! " Herod must have cried within himself, " Why, that is my title! I have no right to it, I know, but no mere Jew shall supplant me! The power of Rome is on my side, and I'll stem the power of this 'stem of Jesse's rod'! " Vain boast! The angel chorus is already singing—this very night, Herod—in the Bethlehem fields! The Wise Men are just now presenting their gifts to the new-born babe and new writers are also now being born who shall fill the page of history with this significant inscription: " Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King, behold there came Wise Men from the East to Jerusalem, saying, ' Where is he that is born " King of the Jews " ? ' To this thou wast never born! Thy day is over; another now reigns in thy stead! "

Two things I would bring together here, two passages from the Word of God that gain added meaning from this telling of tales—one in Matthew, one in Luke: " And it came to pass in those days that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that all the world should be taxed." " Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem in the days of Herod the King." Octavius, the Conqueror of Mark Anthony, is this Cæsar Augustus; Herod, son of Antipater, the Idumean, is this " King of the Jews." The two passages go together. The decree of



Cæsar Augustus brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem to pay their Roman taxation. There, on that visit, amid the taxpaying crowds, "Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King." Rome contributed to the fulfilment of prophecy! Edom bore testimony to the wondrous birth, as well as Judea! Herod the Edomite is made mad with jealousy and suspicion at the news of such a birth. He orders the slaughter of the innocents that this wondrous Child, "born King of the Jews," may not escape. In his insane jealousy he has already slain his wife, her brother, her uncle, great uncle and all his own sons from this wife he loved the most. A few thousand children, more or less, makes no difference in the cruel, brutish heart of this inhuman monster. "In Rama there was a voice heard, lamentation and weeping and great mourning; Rachel weeping for her children and would not be comforted, because they are not!" It was the last, base act of a base life. A few weeks afterward he died of such a loathsome disease that, Josephus says, no one could come near him without disgust and horror. Like his successor, Herod Antipas, it seems as though the hand of God was in the visitation to rebuke this vainglorious and murderous man for all his butchery and vileness. Afraid that no one would mourn his death, he gave orders that the nobles of his court should all be executed at his death, that there might be some genuine grief and mourning at the time of

his passing! Born a son of power and glory, endowed with capabilities that might have made him not only king of Jewry but king of men, he sank to lower levels than the brute and died a death of loathsome horror to which a loathsome life always leads.

The Romans, whom Herod might have used for the advancement of the Jewish people and of Edom, God was now to use for the advancement of the world, through this Babe of Bethlehem, "born in the days of Herod the King." As the Greeks advanced the Jewish religion by their world language and the translation of the Old Testament into that tongue, so now the Romans are to advance the cause of Christianity through their world power, their Roman roads, their penetration into every corner of the world. The Jews also are to aid it because of their dispersion among every kingdom and nation and people and tongue. The Greeks also are to aid it by their language of culture that is still the tongue of learning and intellect, even in the Roman world.

That is the reason that "Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King!" The Jews, accepting this new-born faith, carried it in their wanderings to every part of the then known world. The Romans, through their engineering feats, the bridging of the valleys and leveling of the mountains, furnished a means of transportation that carried the Gospel quickly throughout the

Roman Empire. The Greeks loaned their world-tongue, a common vernacular, into which the Scriptures might be put, both Old and New Testaments, so that the world might read, compare and see that these things were so.

This is the foreground. This shows "why" Jesus was born "in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King." The background, the "once upon a time," shows "when," in what kind of a time, "Jesus was born."

The closing word alone remains. That insistent word is: "How" was He born? That Bethlehem birth was no usual childbirth. A heavenly messenger preceded it, not merely that one to the wondering shepherds, but the one to Mary, destined to be the mother of our Lord: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee," said the angel, "and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

It was not the birth of a human, earthly child; therefore, it was the birth of the Son of God. A star wandering from its fixed orbit guided worshipping Magi to His cradle. A heavenly visitant announced it to the wondering shepherds in the Bethlehem fields and an angelic choir sang the grand chorus of the anthem of that annunciation not only to the shepherds, but through them to all the world. Listen to it this morning, and may the Christmas cheer, the Christmas peace thrill, cheer

and bless all your hearts as you hear it: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men! "


"Suddenly there was with the angels a multitude . . . praising God! " Cannot we, in this Christmas tide, imitate the angels and their song, when we remember all we have to praise God for? Ah, let your anthems rise, your hearts sing "Glory," your lives attest your joy that "once upon a time" "Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King," and that through the grace of God and the power of God the influences of that blessed birth have spread from sea to sea and from pole to pole, until all the world is celebrating at this season, in some way or another, the birthday and the blessings of this glorious Babe, even Jesus Christ our Lord!

### III

## THE PERSONALITY OF JESUS AS A PROOF OF THE CHRIST

*"What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?"*

—Matthew 22:42.

HRIST is today, as He has ever been, the central figure of the universe. About Him all the nations throng, some in doubt, some in rebellion, and some in open adoration. Questions are being asked concerning this Man's life, His character and divine pretensions. Neutrality is impossible. We must take a stand, we must be on one side or the other. Today the same questions are being asked as of old, all of them being summed up in the two pregnant questions of the text: "What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?" It is necessary, therefore, for us to give careful attention to the questions, in order that we may answer them aright, and in doing so we must of necessity weigh again, investigate again, analyse again the wondrous personality of this matchless Man whom we call Jesus of Nazareth, the Redeemer and Saviour of men.

What is personality? Some one has defined it as "ego consciousness." That, however, is the



bare, bald, scientific statement to prove a dead body cannot be a person, that it must have a living, breathing, conscious ego in it before it can be such. Personality, however, is something more than this, it is ego consciousness plus character, plus ability, plus magnetism, desire, will, determination, initiative, power to plan, decide and overcome.

If this be so of personality in the abstract, much more is it so of concrete personality as represented in the Christian life. A living faith must have a living personality behind it. The higher the faith the higher the personality must be in character, ability, magnetism, will, determination, initiative and power, and, when centred in Jesus the Christ, all these must rise beyond the human to the super-human, to the all-powerful and divine.

One of the most significant facts to us, when we study Christianity in the light of comparative religion and theology, is the evidence that Christianity is the only religion in the world founded upon the personality of its Founder. The Buddhist pays little attention to the personality of Guatama, its founder. It requires only devotion to its system, its four great truths, its laws of life and of morals, and all will be well.

Brahminism has no known founder; it is merely an outgrowth of a desire to explain the universe about us. Brahma is an impersonal, self-existent being which is a contradiction of terms, as we cannot have a self-existing being without personality.

All that the Brahmin is required to do is to believe in the Vedas, or sacred writings, commit to memory some of the Upanishads, or "confidential communications" of the gods, and recite as much of the Mahabharata, or sacred epic, as possible, and, when we remember that this great religious epic is eight times longer than the Iliad and Odyssey put together, we can easily understand that this is a great enough religious duty to lay upon any one!

Confucianism lays no stress upon belief in Confucius. He never claimed to be anything more than a philosopher and teacher. To be a true Confucianist you need only follow the teachings of Confucius, memorize his Analects or philosophic maxims, live by them, and you will be happy both for this world and the next.

Mohammedanism does not urge the necessity of doing as Mohammed did. The less it stresses this the better, as his life is not a good model for the world to follow. It merely says: "Believe in the Koran. Follow its precepts, its teachings; memorize its laws, its maxims and commands, and the more you memorize the better educated you will be, the better prepared for time and eternity."

Christianity, on the other hand, stresses belief in the person and work of Christ as the great necessity for salvation. "If ye believe not that I am he," says Christ, "ye shall die in your sins." That is the obverse side of the shield; but read John 3:16, 5:18, 3:36, and you will find in that blessed

life-giving chapter the brighter side of the picture, as given by Christ Himself. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." "He that believeth on him is not condemned." "He that believeth on the Son hath (now and forever) everlasting life." Read Acts 16:31, Romans 10:9, I John 5:1, and scores of other passages, and you will find the ringing testimony of the apostles to this necessity and blessedness of a belief in the personality and work of Christ: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shall believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is (now and forever) born of God."

Lecky, the historian, has well put it when he said, after a study of these other comparative religions with the religion of Christ: "Christianity is not a system of morals; it is the worship of a Person."

Yet the morals, of course, are by no means minimized; the spiritualities are always maximized. The Bible is a system of morals and spiritualities that has no equal in these other systems, and Christians must rigorously follow it. So great, so blessed is the system that Sir Edwin Arnold, after being criticized for apparently setting Buddhism and Brahminism against Christianity in his magnificent

poem, "The Light of Asia," said to Dr. William Ashmore, a veteran American missionary of China, as they met on a trans-Pacific steamer: "I have been criticized for an implied comparison between Buddhism and Christianity in regard to the doctrines derived from them and the principles contained in them respectively. No such object was in my mind. For me, Christianity, rightly viewed, is the crowned queen of religions and immensely superior to every other; and, though I am so great an admirer of much that is great in Hindu philosophy and religion, I would not give away one verse of the Sermon on the Mount for twenty epic poems like the Mahabharata, nor exchange the Golden Rule for twenty new Upanishads."

Yes, the system is great, the doctrine is divine, but He who gave them is greater and diviner! "Christianity," as Dr. R. D. Hitchcock once said, "did not start as a volume, but as a voice! Breathing men, not breathless books, must carry salvation 'round the world! The Gospel must be in the blood like iron, in the eye like fire, in the voice like a trumpet call! It must be preached; preached by men who have had it preached to them; preached to sinners by men who have sinned themselves; preached by dying men to dying men!" And so the dying Lamb of God preached the system of salvation in His own sinless life and character, through His own ringing utterances, through His own powerful personality that was so

unique and matchless as to cause the whole world to wonder.)

Wherein lies this uniqueness of the personality of Christ? John well expresses it when he says: "The word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Grace means graciousness, kindliness, gentleness and sympathetic appreciation. Truth means honesty, frankness, just judgments and impartial dealings. (7)

Take the most adverse of Christ's critics and you find the same testimony wrung from them, in regard to the personality and character of this unique Man, that contradicts all their other sinister traductions. (11-12) Critics

"He is," says Strauss, "the highest object we can possibly imagine with respect to religion, the Being without whose presence in the mind perfect piety is impossible." (Yet Strauss, in his *Das Leben Jesu*, denounces all but the bare outline of His life as a myth, the result of hallucination on the part of His followers.) (1)

"The Christ of the Gospels," says Renan, "is the most beautiful incarnation of God in the most beautiful of forms. His beauty is eternal. His reign will never end." (Yet Renan is the one who shocked all Christendom in his *La Vie de Jesus* by not only denying the divinity of Christ but even raising questions concerning His moral integrity.) (2)



This analysis and testimony, then, gives the answer to the first part of the text; it tells what the world in general thinks of Christ, but we must go much more deeply in our analysis of this personality if we are to give answer to the second part—if we are to find out “Whose son is he?”

It was Alexander Pope who gave us the truism: “The proper study of mankind is man.” It was Grecian philosophy that gave us the maxim and exhortation, “*Gnothi se auton*”—“Know thyself!” It is the ego consciousness of man that prompts him to unhesitatingly meet both these challenges and strive to understand his genesis, his mission and his destiny. Personality is ego consciousness plus. Therefore, to analyse the personality we must inquire of its own consciousness as to its idea of who it is, why it is, whence it came and whither it is tending. “The heart knoweth its own bitterness” and the soul knows its own being better than anyone—save God.

Analysing thus the personality of Jesus through His own consciousness, to find who He is, we are struck with the early manifestation of the consciousness of His union with God. At the age of twelve, He goes to Jerusalem with His reputed father and mother and strays from them as He finds the lawyers, the doctors and the rabbis in the temple arguing concerning spiritual things. Three days they search for Him, and when they find Him amid the learned circle, His mother says reprov-

ingly, "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." Mark, now, how Jesus answers: "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Here was the first conscious break with the earthly and the assertion of the heavenly. Here was His first conscious declaration as to who He was. His reputed father's business was not theology, but carpentry, therefore, He is here for the first time declaring, through His own consciousness, that He is not Joseph's son.

At the age of thirty, He starts out upon His life's mission and inaugurates it by the miracle at the marriage feast of Cana. His mother, according to the flesh, is with Him, but it is here that His ego consciousness is to make another break with the earthly and to put itself in a position of divine isolation as regards all human relationship. She, noting the lack at the feast and knowing already, in her own consciousness, the divine power of this great Son, says to Him: "They have no wine." Then it is that Jesus makes that apparently harsh statement: "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come." The statement is not as harsh as it sounds to us, unaccustomed as we are to the vernacular of the East, but at least it marks the repudiation of another reputed earthly relationship. He calls her not "mother," but "madam." He disavows His human relationship with her. "What have I to do with thee?" He is

not, then, by any ordinary *human* generation, the son of Mary.

If you would have this emphasized still farther, turn to the story of the Crucifixion, where He sees Mary and John standing at the foot of the cross and says to Mary: "Woman, behold thy son!" and to John He says: "Behold thy mother!" Is it not significant that He uses the word "mother" when He speaks to John, but not when He speaks to Mary? Look through the New Testament and tell me how often do you find Jesus calling Mary "mother." Not once. Is it not significant, then, that this consciousness of Jesus, manifested all through His life, from youth to manhood and up to the very hour of His death, should definitely disavow this apparent and reputed earthly relationship? He is certainly, at least, most emphatically avowing He is not the son of Joseph and of Mary.

"Whose son is he?" We are trying to reach a definite conclusion by that old philosophical yet logical and mind-satisfying route—the law of exclusion. He is not the son of Joseph and Mary. "Whose son is he?" When Christ asked the question of the Pharisees that day, they promptly responded: "The son of David." But Christ as quickly replied: "How, then, doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying: The Lord said unto my Lord: Sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him

Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions."

Ah! We hear much of the logic of Paul, but not enough of the logic of Jesus! Here is logic that surpasses that of Paul before Felix, Paul before Agrippa or Paul on Mars Hill. It stopped their mouths! Out of their own mouths He proved that He was not the son of David.

"Whose son is he?" "Well," some say, "by the logic of the Scriptures, He is certainly the Son of Adam, our great progenitor. He is called 'The Last Adam,' as our great forefather was 'the first Adam.' He is, therefore, of Adam's line, the son of the father of all flesh."

Let us look more closely into this so-called "logic of the Scriptures," however, and compare it with the consciousness of Christ, the combination of which will perhaps give us the one thing that logically and scientifically proves His personality.

When we examine His personality we find that it is unique among the children of men in that it is utterly sinless. When we examine His own consciousness, we find that it has no personal consciousness of sin. When we examine the Scriptures, we find that they say most emphatically: "He was, in all points, tempted like as we are, yet without sin." "He was manifested to take away our sin, and in him is no sin."

Now, sin is as definitely a mark of humanity as

mentality and consciousness. It is also the inheritance of the children of Adam from our great progenitor. "The similitude of Adam's transgression" is upon us all. "We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God." "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." "The covenant being made with Adam not only for himself but his posterity, all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him and fell with him in his first transgression."

If there be one, then, of the race of men, *without* sin, it proves that he has not descended from Adam by ordinary generation. That is surely logical and conclusive! The followers of Jesus claimed that He was sinless, His critics admitted it and Jesus Himself declared it, with divine assurance. "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" He challenged the assembled scribes and Pharisees and—enemies though they were—they could make no reply. He was no legatee of Adam's first transgression. He had no part nor lot in the inheritance of the children of Adam, therefore, He was not Adam's son.

"Whose son is he?" If the soul knoweth its own being better than anyone save God it is well for us to carry our analysis still further and inquire of His own consciousness as to whose son He is. Hear these definite assertions of His personality from His own lips: "Ye are from beneath; I am



from above: ye are of the world, I am not of this world." Still more definite does He make His assertion as He cries: "I proceeded forth and came from God." "He that honoureth not the son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him." "No man can come unto me, except it were given him of my Father." "In my Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you."

Here, then, is a definite, logical sequence. Jesus is not of this world, but from above. His own consciousness tells Him this; He proves it in a thousand various ways. He knows He proceeded from God. He knows He is the son of God. He separates Himself from all human relationships. We are of this world; He is not of this world. God is spoken of as "Your Father" when He speaks to His followers, but never as "Our Father." He keeps Himself separate and distinct from the world. When they cry: "Lord, teach us to pray," He replies: "When ye pray, say: *Our* Father which art in heaven." That is the personal attitude for them alone. He never includes Himself with them. When He speaks of His personal relation with God He always says: "*My* Father." Is not this significant? Does this not tell us whose son He is?

Now, go still further. Note His particular and intimate relationship with God, a relationship far more than of earthly father and son. He is the

Vicegerent of God—He is part of God. “I am come in my Father’s name.” “I and my Father are one.” Philip, crying: “Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us,” is answered by Jesus in tender reproach, as He replies: “Have I been so long time with you and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then: ‘Show us the Father?’ . . . Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me.”

“Whose son is he?” The son of God, very God of very God, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! The Jews had asked Him: “If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.” And Jesus had answered: “I told you and ye believed me not. The works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me.” His works, then, no matter what others may say, bear witness of His divine power and deity. Yes, He had told them again and again in definite words and also in mighty works, and they believed not. He told it at the very beginning of His ministry to the woman of Samaria when she said: “I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ. When he is come he will tell us all things.” And Jesus said to her unequivocally, definitely, authoritatively: “I that speak unto thee am *He*.” Almost at the end of His ministry, when He was brought before the high priest, ere He was sent to Pilate for sentence and execution, being asked by the high priest: “Art thou the Christ, the son of the

(5)

Blessed? ” He said again, simply, unequivocally and definitely: “ I am! ”

Through all of that life and ministry He bore witness as to who He was by the deeds He did, by the tender ministries to the sick, afflicted and heavy laden, by His power over life and death as He proved His words: “ I am the resurrection and the life. ” “ Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest. ” By all these mighty works He did He put the stamp of deity upon His marvellous personality. No one can disbelieve in the divine power and Godhead of Jesus Christ without disbelieving and throwing overboard the whole Christian statement in the Scriptures of His oneness with God.

Those who were nearest to Him, who knew Him best, knew Him for what He was! Hear Nathaniel as he says: “ Rabbi, thou art the son of God; thou art the king of Israel. ” Hear Martha as she cries: “ I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world. ” Hear Peter, as he testifies for himself and the rest of the disciples: “ We believe, and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. ”

Even His enemies, those who hated Him and crucified Him, knew Him for what He was and were compelled to testify to His goodness, His greatness and His deity. Herod said: “ I find in this man nothing worthy of death. ” Pilate said: “ I find in him no fault at all. ” The centurion and

③ soldiers who crucified Him—Romans, heathen idolaters though they were—when they saw the darkness at mid-day, the lightning flash, the earthquake's power, the groaning and travailing of all nature, as He died—were compelled to cry, "Truly, this *was* the Son of God! "

With the shadow of that scene over you, what is your testimony to the personality of Jesus? Whose son is He? Jesus is again on trial before the world. His critics and His enemies are now even more numerous than in His own day. He is being derided, mocked and crucified afresh by a cold, cruel and critical world. What is your testimony for "The Man before the bar"? What think ye of Christ? Whose son is He? God grant, in view of all this testimony and with the Spirit's witness in your heart, you may be able to cry, with Peter, as you look into His patient, loving and expectant face: "We believe and are *sure* that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God! "

*The Testimony  
of fact  
the Resurrection!*

## IV

### ATONING LOVE <sup>1</sup>

*"Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures."*

—I Corinthians 15:3.

**M**EMBERS of my invisible audience, I feel that before commencing my sermon this afternoon I ought to get acquainted with you or, failing this, that you ought to get acquainted with me, that you may know the person behind the voice, and so understand me better.

There are doubtless many Jews and Gentiles, Catholics and Protestants listening in this afternoon. There are certainly many Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists, Episcopalians, and Presbyterians in this widespread audience, and I feel that I have some connection with you all.

I was born a Protestant, reared with Catholics, and played with Jews as a child. I was born in a Methodist home, went to an Episcopal school, joined the Presbyterian Church, was called to a Dutch Reformed Church, found that I could not "reform," and so am now a Presbyterian again.

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<sup>1</sup> Delivered from Radio Station WEAf.



This, I trust, makes it possible for me to call you all "My dear people," for you are my people, my own particular congregation, for the time being at least—unless you switch off from me to listen to a concert, or go to sleep. The latter would not disqualify you, however, as my own regular congregation does this, sometimes!

I must hurry, however, or my friend Cadman will be crowding me off the air to turn on his own. His is always good air, though—as refreshing as a breeze from the Sierras, or from the classic heights of Mount Hymettus, and well worth waiting for. Nevertheless, I have one great advantage over him this afternoon. You are more my congregation than his, for he talks to you only as a "side issue," through that other congregation at the Y. M. C. A., while I have you all to myself and talk to you alone, in this brief half-hour at the studio.

What preacher was it that said of his sermon: "Thirty minutes—in which to raise the dead"? I have thirty minutes in which to keep the living *awake*—and that is sometimes almost as impossible a task.

Now, turn to your Bibles. You have them by you, of course. Find I Corinthians 15:3, and you will see my text. Will you read it aloud with me? Now, all together: "*Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures.*"

"According to the Scriptures." That is a mag-

nificent introduction. Anything that is "According to the Scriptures" must be all right. In the midst of all the storms of life, the uncertainties, the adverse winds and tempestuous conditions, it is a blessed thing to have a sure and certain anchorage ground and this you can always find on the lee side of what Gladstone called "The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture."

"Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures." That takes us back to the Old Testament, to Exodus, where the lamb without spot or blemish was sacrificed for the sins of the people. That takes us back to Isaiah, and that blessed fifty-third chapter, where the prophet cries: "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was laid upon him and by his stripes we are healed." That takes us forward to John, surnamed the Baptist, as he pointed to the approaching Jesus and cried: "Behold the lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world!" That takes us forward to Christ Himself, who cried: "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me!" That takes us forward to Calvary! Calvary, the abyss of the world's greatest sorrow, the summit of the world's greatest hope and expectation! Calvary, shrouded with gloom and muffled with silence out of which there broke a sighing, sobbing whisper: "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do!" Calvary, that banished the darkness with

the lightening flashes of heavenly glory and shattered the silence with the echoing thunders of God's triumph, as the Son of God and man shouted in victory: "It is finished!" and joyfully gave up His life for you and me.

Yes, mark that passage in red as a sign of a blood-bought redemption. Write it in letters of gold as a mark of a world's tribute to a divine hero, martyr and sacrificial God: "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures."

But, why did He *die*? The text says it was "for our sins," and that shows the enormity of them; that shows the heinousness of them; that shows the awful danger in which we were placed because of them!

O yes, I know there are some of you saying that this idea of sin is old-fashioned;—it's a "back number" now. Some of you are perhaps getting ready to "switch off" and are saying you don't want to hear any more of *that*, but let me tell you before you go that though you call it "perverted taste," "psychologic hysteria," "youthful indiscretion," "egoistic abnormality," "psychic rebellion" against law, order and decency, it is the old Sin that has followed man from the Garden of Eden and that will follow him to the gates of the Garden of God—where it will be forever shut out! Dress it up as you please; give it the iridescent wings of pleasure and luxurious indulgence, it is the same old Sin, made more *fatal* as it is made more

*facile*, and dragging more down in its *beauty* than it ever did in its *bestiality*!

You hate a slimy caterpillar; you shrink from touching it, but let it go through the larva and chrysalis stage and emerge as a beautiful butterfly and how you admire it! how you love it! how you chase it for the beauty of its colouring and the gracefulness of its form! So Sin may go through many transmutations, it may change itself into a thousand forms, but it is the same old Sin, made much more terrible now by its deceptive dress and lascivious appeal.

Alexander Pope put it rightly when he said:

*"Vice is a creature of such hideous mien,  
That to be hated, needs but to be seen;  
But seeing oft, familiar with her face,  
We first endure, then pity, then embrace!"*

Christ, with His divine insight, saw Sin as it *was*, not as it *appeared* to be. He knew its terrible nature and consequences. He knew that "the wages of Sin is death," and died Himself, as our Substitute, to pay that inevitable price, that we might live forever, freed from its guilt and power.

"But, why should *He* die?" still others say. "Why could not man suffer for his own transgressions and make his own atonement?" He does *suffer* for his sins. No man can transgress *any* law without suffering, but suffering is not atonement. To atone means to expiate, to make amends,

to reconcile, to appease. Suffering does not do this, even in ordinary physical things, much less is it possible in spiritual things. You may suffer in a fight with your neighbour, but that does not reconcile you to him, nor make amends, nor expiate the wrong. You may even be taken to courts and be made to suffer there, but that does not reconcile you to the law nor atone to the one you have wronged. Therefore, if a man cannot atone for himself in physical things, it is unthinkable that he can atone in spiritual things for his wrongdoing. Man cannot make his own atonement for his own sin, because Sin is not physically but spiritually conceived, and the sinner, not being spiritual, cannot operate in the realm of the spiritual.

Now, lest these things be a little involved, let me illustrate them in a simple yet effective way: A man breaks a law; becomes a criminal. He is not found out, however. He walks the streets a free man. Does he really *feel* free? He knows he has done wrong; his conscience will give him no rest, and so he goes, at last, and gives himself up. He is sent to prison, serves his time and pays the full penalty of the law. Has he atoned to his own conscience? By no means—if he has a conscience. He comes out just as bad as ever, goes back to the old life and yet finds no rest in it, no satisfaction for his soul. He is wretched, conscience-stricken, and wonders why, since he has fulfilled all the requirements of the law. Then he is led, by some

special providence, into a rescue mission, hears the glorious Gospel of Christ's atonement for Sin, confesses his wrongdoing to God and asks God, for Christ's sake, to apply His atoning work to him, and immediately has the load lifted from his conscience, is freed from guilt before *God* and becomes "a new creature in Christ Jesus"—a respected member of society.

You know of many such cases: John B. Gough, Jerry McAuley, John Bunyan and thousands of others who were dead in trespasses and Sin, who had been before the law many times and had paid its price, but found no rest until Christ's atonement was applied to them. It shows most conclusively that man cannot cleanse himself, that he cannot atone for himself, that it is only "The blood of Jesus Christ (that) cleanseth us from *all Sin*."

But now you may ask: "*How* does the blood of Jesus Christ cleanse us from *all sin*, and *why* would no other sacrifice avail?" The answer is most simply given in that well known hymn:

*"There was no other good enough  
To pay the price of sin.  
He only could unlock the gates  
Of heaven and let us in."*

A chair, a table, a bed cannot atone for a child's sin, though he may kick and pound and scratch them in his anger. A horse cannot atone for a



man's sin, though some brutal driver may whip and beat it unmercifully because he is drunk or mad with passion. A man cannot even atone for his own sin, as we have already seen. Why are all these things so? Because these are material and physical things, and Sin, *in its essence*, is immaterial and spiritual. You may sin against physical law and suffer for it—aye, even atone for it, if it is *merely* physical—since that is corporeal and material as you are, but if your sin is also against God's law—His spiritual law—then it enters into the domain of pure spirit, and here you cannot atone, because you are physical.

Sin, then, *in its true essence*, is wrong against pure spirit, and only *pure spirit* can atone. Christ is Pure Spirit. He only can atone. That is the reason "Christ bare in his own body our sins upon the tree." That is the reason He suffered for our sins, "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God"—that He might "reconcile us to God." That is the reason "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures."

Is there another question you would like to ask, if you were here this afternoon? If there is, I'll venture it is another "Why?" question, and doubtless goes something like this: "Why, even with the necessity of pure spirit atoning, did Christ die for *our* sins, though it be according to the Scriptures?"

Why? Ask the mother why she slaves and toils

for a son or a daughter who has deceived and mistreated her, mocked and derided and scorned her? Why? Ask the soldier why he fights and suffers and is willing to die for his country, though it has barely given him a living, oppressed him with hard taxes and limited his freedom with laws which he feels to be harsh? Why? Ask the wife why she stays by her husband after his love has flown, after he has abused her, maligned and misrepresented her and made her life a veritable hell? In their replies you will find the answer to your question.

The love-sick boy or girl, the young man and young woman in the midst of their first romance, are apt to think that their love is the highest, deepest, purest spring of love that ever gushed into being in the world, but I want to tell you young men and women—especially if you be of those who have wandered from the old home and forgotten your mother's love and prayers—that there is a higher love than yours waiting for you in that old home, buried deep in the unquenchable fires of your dear mother's heart! I want to tell you cynical men of the world, who have lost yourselves in the love of money and selfish gain, that there is a higher love than yours that lies buried in many a battlefield, or that still flames in many a patriot soul that would give up everything *you* hold dear—and everything they love on earth—for the greater love of unselfish, self-sacrificing devotion to the land they treasure more than life itself! I want to

tell you men who have left the warmth of your own firesides to warm yourself at another's, who have left the joys of your own home untouched to go and rob another's of its fidelity and happiness, that there is a greater warmth, a greater joy, a greater love awaiting you at your own hearthstone than ever you will find in the secret and lascivious loves that you are wallowing in today! I want to say to you all, with all the depth and earnestness of my being, that Love, in its ultimate analysis—in its highest, deepest, broadest meaning—is *sexless*! It crucifies the *flesh* and exalts the *spirit*. It is all-absorbing, sacrificial, Gethsemanic, Golgothic! It is not *passion*; it is *purity*—purity *purged* of passion, even as by fire. It is not venal, but vicarious. It does not take, it gives—gives for the joy of giving—without thought of a reward. It spends itself and becomes richer in the spending. It loses itself to find itself. It dies of its devotion and yet lives in lives made better by its contact. It lives to die, and dying—lives forevermore!

That is why Christ died for *you* and *me*. That is why He “died for *our* sins, according to the Scriptures.” That is why, “while *we* were yet *sinners*, Christ died for *us*.” Such love as this does not demand *worthiness*; it goes out to the *unworthy*—to the one who rails at it, scorns it, blasphemes it! It *seeks* to save; it loves the lost; it sacrifices itself for those who would make no sacrifice for it—for those who mock it and spit upon it

even in the sacrifice! This is the highest, deepest, broadest, purest Love in the world. This is Christ's love for *you*!

*" Oh! 'twas love, 'twas wondrous love,  
The love of Christ to me;  
It brought my Saviour from above,  
To die on Calvary! "*

That is my message to you this afternoon, my dear, invisible congregation. I may never see you in the flesh, but Christ sees you. He is yearning over you now, as a mother over her babe. He is crying, O, so tenderly, " Son, daughter, give me thine heart! " He wants to save you from *yourself*, from the sins which do so easily beset you. He wants to save you from wrong lives, from heart-aches and heart-breaks, which must follow ceaselessly if you persist in sin. Don't say there is no such thing. Your own heart and conscience are telling you differently, even now while I speak. Be honest—at least with God! Unbare your heart before Him as He, by His Holy Spirit, pleads with you. Tell Him your trials, your troubles, your doubts, your sins, your fears. " If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Confess your sins. Accept His salvation, which He died to give you, and make His love your own. Love begets love. Does not this love of His fan to flame some faint, smouldering ashes

in your heart? Love believes. Can you not, then, believe Love?

May everyone of you who hear my voice this afternoon, and have not yet believed in nor accepted of this sacrificial and atoning love of Christ, be broken from your hardness and rebellion at this very hour as, throwing yourself at the foot of the Cross of the world's Redeemer, you cry, in acceptance of His love and mercy:

*“ My Jesus, I love Thee!  
I know Thou art mine!  
For Thee, all the pleasures  
Of sin, I resign!  
My gracious Redeemer,  
My Saviour, art Thou!  
If ever I loved Thee,  
My Jesus, 'tis now! ”*




## V

### SOME MILESTONES ON THE WAY TO GOD <sup>1</sup>

*"Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat."—Job 23:3.*

*"And a highway shall be there—and a way—and it shall be called the way of holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it but it shall be for those; the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein."—Isaiah 35:8.*

IFE has had many contrasts and comparisons, but the one that is most understood and appreciated by us is that simile, found in modern Romance, which calls it: The Broad Highway.

This highway is not only broad but tortuous. It also has many byways that lead from it where deeds, that even the world will not countenance, are done in thickets, forests, bogs and moorlands. There feuds flourish. There evil of the blackest kind does its worst. From thence comes the sound of wars and rumours of wars while the cries of the wounded and dying, the sobs and shrieks and groans of the oppressed and the curses and blasphemies of the underworld mingle in one great

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<sup>1</sup> Delivered from Radio Station WEAf.

raucous sound that splits the eardrums of the sensitive and spiritual.

Meanwhile on The Broad Highway the Pageant of Life goes grandly on, sometimes in shadow, but more often in sunshine, and the glitter of it all blinds the unwary to the fact of the byways into which they oftentimes stumble and makes them not to realize that the sunshine is continually fading and that the end of the Highway is therefore certain to be steeped in blackest darkness.

Alongside that Highway and running through it at times is another not so broad but straight and well defined. It also has sunshine and shadow, but the difference is that in this Way the sunshine grows brighter and more continuous with each step of the distance traversed. It cuts a straight, sure line in the midst of the Highway of Life, when that runs true, and enjoys the same sunshine and pleasure, when that is pure and unsullied. But when the Highway becomes tortuous and the road foul and muddy, then the Way cuts through the windings and goes onward in a straight course for its destined end.

That is the vision which Isaiah saw that day when he cried: "And an highway shall be there and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for those:—the warfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein."

Now, because of its great desirability, many who

are on the Highway of Life are searching for this Way, that is sometimes in the midst of it and sometimes far removed because of the tortuous windings of Life. They seldom seek it when it can so easily be found, but when the windings begin and the darker shadows fall; when the Highway becomes so foul and muddy that even they are disgusted and afraid, then it is that they seek it in their sin or sorrow or trial, for they know that God is in the Way of Holiness and that His seat and throne is at the end of it, where lies rest and peace for their souls. Therefore they cry like Job of old: "Oh that I knew where I might find him! That I might come even to his seat."

Let me, then, this morning, dear ones, give you some of the signs that mark this Way of Holiness; some of the milestones on the way to God.

The first one that you must look for is that milestone marked: Desire. It lies hard by the bypath which is called Indifference. Yes, there are bypaths even from the Way of Holiness, and some of them are coincident with the bypaths on the Highway of Life. This one of Indifference is found leading from and to each path, and if you come to the end of it you will be sure to find the straight path of The Way crossing some winding of the Highway of Life.

How can you find The Way if you are indifferent to religion and God? This must end, and in its place must grow desire,—desire for God, for His

way instead of the way of the world, and there must go up from your heart that same yearning cry of Job's: "Oh that I knew where I might find him!" Then, at once, out of the mists and shadows that have enveloped you, you will find looming up before you this milestone marked: Desire, and thus you will know that you are on The Way to God.

You see, then, that this is as necessary to the nominal Christian as to the mere worldling. You may have started on the way to God and wandered into this bypath of indifference. You may not have started at all and yet not be a gross sensualist, but only walking indifferently in a way that suggests no thought of God. Whichever it is, be sure you will never find Him nor the way *back* to Him unless that indifference is banished and something stirs within your soul that makes you yearn for God. Then will you come out of the byway into The Way of Holiness and find the milestone of Desire as the first signpost on the way that leads to God.

Going forward, now, with more assurance, and examining your own heart by the way, you will come to another milestone that has an open Book upon it, and this stone is marked: Meditation. Gladly do you go forward; eagerly do you seize the Book and you find it is a Book of Directions, telling you the way and how to walk in it.

The Keeper of the Way is not unmindful of the needs of the Traveller. He knows that such an one

needs directing, and so He has left a Guide-Book there for each wayfarer, so that the most foolish may not err therein. Study the Book. Learn more of the road along which you are going, and you will have less trouble in reaching your destined goal. You would not start on a journey without a guide-book, would you? Then be sure to take this one with you which the One to whom you are journeying has left so conveniently for you on The Way.

And now the pathway rises, but it is an easy and a pleasant slope. It leads to purer air and brighter scenes, and when you reach the upland you will be rested and invigorated by the rarer, purer atmosphere that is all about you. Here on the upland you will find another milestone, and near it an altar. On the milestone is deeply graven the one word: Prayer, and as you see it you bow in reverence and devotion before the altar set there, to thank God for the way He has brought you and to ask for further strength and guidance ere you go farther forward.

Yes, and here, if you have not fully understood the Guide-Book, you can personally ask directions of the Keeper of the Way. A personal word with One who knows the way is always much better than a guide-book. Here is One who not only knows the way, but has written the Guide-Book. He can explain all that you have not understood and clear up all your difficulties.

Yes, talk with Him by the way. Rest here and



get further directions, as well as refreshment and new vigour, and your journey will be easier, brighter, better for the time you spend at this blessed milestone.

The way still rises. You are climbing to the hills now—the Hills of God. How wonderful the view as you go! How bright the prospect! You seem to be going up to the very gates of heaven! You are half-way there, at least! At the top of this ascent you will find a milestone that stands at the half-way mark, and that milestone is graven with the word: Faith. As you reach it and look back over the steepes you have ascended, you wonder how you ever did it until you remember that faith has wings and then you know that you have been upborne by pinions which you had never been conscious of before.

You will want to tarry here because of the view and vision which you get, but remember this is only the half-way mark. There are yet three more milestones on the way, and these you must reach before you come to the End of the Way. You must go on and see what your Guide has yet in store for you.

And now you come to a pleasant Woodland. It is open to the sunlight. The ground is carpeted with flowers as well as grass and shrubs. The birds seek the brighter sunlight in the tops of the trees and you listen to their songs in the filtered light as you wander onward with your heart strangely exalted and tenderly thrilled. Then under a wide-

spreading tree, that still lets the sunlight through, you see another milestone and are not surprised to find it marked: Love.

That is the feeling that has been surging through your soul:—love for God; love for man; love for all created things, and it so thrills you with a desire to *do* that you hasten on and rest not here at all, but seek the open road again that you may show your love in some way.

This is not so pleasant a part of the path as that over which you have just come. There are rocks here, and hidden stones in the dust which bruise your feet, but still you go steadily on, eager to see the reading on the next milestone which already you are anticipating.

Yes, your anticipating was right:—the milestone reads: Service. Who can hope to walk the way that leads to God without service? It is a hard part of the path, but it has its joys:—the joy of helping others; the joy of bringing sunshine where before there was shadow only; the joy of cheering and encouraging those less confident who otherwise might turn out into the bypath marked Ease, and lose the Way of Holiness. Ah! it is this stretch of the road that gives you more strength and confidence than any other, for the exercise of your faith strengthens instead of diminishes it, and you are the more ready to go on your way rejoicing.

And now the Way is descending. It is leading you into a fruitful Valley. The trees here are not

merely ornamental, but filled with fruit. The fields are filled with ripened harvests. The flowers even yield their food for the bees that store up honey for the Travellers, and lowing herds tell the traveller that he has indeed "reached the Land of Corn and Wine," of "Milk and Honey,"—of all those blessed needful things that are enjoyed by those who have come on a long road and through service in the Labour of Love are ready for rest and enjoyment.

Yes, this is Beulah Land, and in the midst of it is the last milestone on your journey, which is marked: Contentment. Here you can wander in peaceful scenes. Here you can talk with Heavenly Visitants. Here you can exchange confidences with your fellow-travellers as you wander by the river that separates you from the Promised Land, which is the Goal of your journey. You can see it from Beulah Land,—this Land of Contentment. It is only a narrow stream that divides you. Its goodly walls and towers and battlements shine with the splendour of God as you gaze across the river to the Everlasting Hills upon which it stands. You have no fear of the River. You know that you will have a Pilot to guide you through its rapids and bring you safely to the other side, and up those Shining Steeps to the Celestial City and to the very Seat of God.

So you wait in the Vale of Contentment until your call comes to cross the River. You say good-bye to many friends as they are passing over, and


long to go yourself. And then—the Call comes. An Angel Visitant whispers to you that the King awaits you; that your Pilot is ready, and you step down into the River and take His hand fearlessly—nay, joyfully, as you cry: “I have fought a good fight! I have finished my course! I have kept the faith! Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing! ”

## VI

### TADMOR IN THE WILDERNESS

*"And Solomon built Tadmor in the wilderness."*

—I Kings 9:17, 18.

N the northeast of Damascus, five days' ride into the dreary wastes of the Syrian desert, lies the ancient city of Tadmor. The modern village is but a group of two-score huts or so,—rude, mean and unattractive to the eye—but the ruins which surround it show a grandeur equal to any of that of Greece or Rome in the days of their old-time pride and splendour. Towers and temples, pylons and palaces, carven columns and capitals and cornices all lift their heads in haughty grandeur still, or lie as fallen giants in the sand, "majestic though in ruin." So great and inspiring is the sight, indeed, that travellers count the time well spent, nor fear the desert's weariness, to journey thither and muse amid the ruins of its ancient glory.

Here Justinian built a fort to repel the rude attacks of desert nomads against the power of Rome. Here Aurelian, still earlier, marched against that desert Queen Zenobia, who ruled in



Tadmor when it was called by its Grecian name, Palmyra. Here Zenobia had reigned in such glory as to rouse the envy of Aurelian and cause the siege that proved her downfall. In six brief years she had extended her sway over all Syria, over Mesopotamia, and over part of ancient Egypt. She had attracted scholars, artists, architects, and artisans until Tadmor, or Palmyra, as it was then called, caught the attention of the world, and was noted everywhere for its learning, literature, science, and architecture and mechanical arts, as well as for its arms and military achievements. Here Odenathus, her husband, had before her reigned as king, and laid the foundation for that glory that was afterwards to be trailed in the dust as Aurelian led the captive queen, chained to his chariot-wheels, through the streets of conquering Rome.

First a republic, under the protection of Rome, Odenathus had dared to arrogate to himself the title of emperor after rendering valiant service to the Roman state in its war against Sapor, King of Persia, and under that title he had been allowed to reign by grateful Rome until the growing glories of Tadmor or Palmyra roused the envy of Aurelian and brought it to its ruin. Here, still earlier, in 34 B. C., Tadmor had gained such place and position as to arouse the cupidity of Marc Antony, who made a predatory expedition thither, though the Palmyreans succeeded in foiling him by carry-

ing off their treasures to their friends, the Parthians, beyond the Euphrates. And here, still further back in history, that builder of builders, that King of Kings, that founder of philosophies, states and empires: "Solomon built Tadmor in the wilderness," and built it so fair and grand, so stately and beautiful as to make it a fitting adjunct of that kingdom which became so grand and glorious as to cause even Sheba's queen, used as she was to grandeur and magnificence, to cry in wonder: "The half has never been told."

Five days in the desert, and yet so beautiful? Barrenness and desolation all around, and yet so glorious? Why was it that these pylons and pinnacles, these temples and entablatures were raised? Why was it that thus far out amid the sand dunes of the Syrian wilderness such magnificence was reared?

Three explanations present themselves as we think of the place, position and history of ancient Tadmor, or Palmyra:

First—It was to afford a means of rest and refreshment for the toilers and wayfarers of the wilderness.

Second—It was to open up a gateway from the East to the West for all the Orient treasures which the caravans brought across the desert from Eastern Asia and India. Or,

Third—It was a bold design on the part of Solomon, that prince of builders, to overcome

the difficult and seemingly impossible by founding such magnificence in the midst of its desert wastes.

It might have been the first, the second, or the third of these reasons—it might have been all three; but either one would have been sufficient reason for the founding of this strange city.

Of all the toilers or the wayfarers, he who is condemned to labour or to wander in the desert is the most to be pitied. I have seen the weary camel-trains come in through the evening light across the Libyan and Arabian deserts. I have seen the sagging footsteps of the camels as they came toiling on, and the mute, appealing faces of their drivers as their bodies drearily swayed to the weary motion of their beasts of burden. I myself have gone across the lonely desert wastes from noon to long-drawn eve with never a sight of tree or shrub or flower, nor wayside spring nor running stream, but only one dreary waste of sand from horizon to horizon, and I have learned what an oasis in the wilderness means; how much it is needed and longed for, and how blessed the man would be who would, for humanity's sake, establish such a resting-place where runnig streams might flow and longed-for refreshment might be found.

Solomon was a humane man. His dealing with the woman when she came to him for judgment concerning her stolen child, showed that. His

treatment also of Shimei, though he had cursed his father, proved also that his heart was right. The needs, therefore, of the Syrian desert toiler might well stir his heart to action,—their need of a resting-place, of a place of refreshment, of an oasis in the desert wastes—and undoubtedly such things as these would be in his mind when “Solomon built Tadmor in the wilderness.”

Then, again, Solomon was desirous of safeguarding what he felt should be his own. He wanted in every way to extend the trade and commerce of his kingdom, and in no way could he do it better than through opening a gateway to or from the East.

It was a time when Milton's phrase could best be applied to the Orient: “The gorgeous East showered on her kings barbaric pearl and gold,” and Solomon was anxious to have some of them for himself. The Syrian desert was the caravan route from Eastern Asia and India to the Mediterranean. The site of Tadmor was right in the track of these Eastern caravans, therefore “Solomon built Tadmor in the wilderness,” that he might make it a stopping-place for those caravans and a gateway to his own domains, feeling sure that the man who established an oasis in the desert and built a city for the rest and refreshment of the caravans would not be forgotten by the merchants and traders who brought the treasures of the East to the waiting West.

Still further, Solomon was ambitious. He had already established a reputation as the greatest builder of his time. Seven years of arduous toil he had bestowed on building the marvellous temple of the Lord on Mount Moriah, and thirteen years on the building of his magnificent palace by its side. He had sent 30,000 men among the cedars of Lebanon to hew and square and fashion the timbers of the Lord's house, and with other hewers of wood in other places, had a total of 80,000 men working in wood alone. He had, in addition to the draughtsmen, designers, silversmiths and goldsmiths, the workers in Tyrian purple and embroideries and fine linens for the temple service, a total of 70,000 ordinary labourers, and over them all a force of 3,300 overseers who superintended the work.

No difficulty was too great for this man to overcome. The rocky summit of Mount Moriah not offering room enough for his stupendous building scheme, he had increased its surface by building up great foundations from the valley, and filling them in, had built thereon his wonderful palace, that it might stand beside the temple of the Lord. He had requisitioned the gold of Ophir, as well as the cedars of Lebanon, the Tyrian purple, as well as the Damascene embroideries. Kings were called at his command to aid him, and artisans and artificers from every land, from every realm. He called Hiram, King of Tyre, who aided him in



materials, men and measures, and Hiram, also of the tribe of Naphthali, who was "filled with wisdom and understanding, and cunning to work all works in brass." No land was too distant, no labour too arduous, no expense too great, no difficulty too stupendous in accomplishing the purposes of God, and the desires of his own heart; and so, after the seven years on the temple, and the thirteen years on his own house, these 150,000 workmen, with their 3,300 overseers and master builders, finished the work he had given them in charge, and he had accomplished that which many would have said had been impossible.

Now, here is another task he fain would have set himself. Tadmor in the wilderness is a dreary waste. Can he make it to blossom and flourish as a rose? Where will he get his stones and timbers? The desert cannot furnish them. If found, how transplant them across those shifting sands? Five days from Damascus, aye, but many a weary league must they be brought before they reach Damascus! How overcome all of these obstacles? How care for the thousands of men necessary while they are overcoming them out here in the barren wilderness? It is a hard task, and seemingly impossible, but that is the task that this master builder likes, and so we may say, for the sheer joy of overcoming the difficult and seemingly impossible: "Solomon built Tadmor in the wilderness"

that men might see that all things are possible if we will but persevere. Thus preparing the way by his indomitable energy, he founded a city of such importance that Antony found it wealthy enough, even before the Christian era, to excite his cupidity, that Odenathus found great enough to establish as a republic and then an empire, that Zenobia embellished still further with towers and temples, pylons and palaces, and Aurelian and Justinian afterwards fortified to keep its treasures from a common foe.

Here, then, is history that he who runs may read. Here is example that should stir our souls, and many a moral that should adorn the tale, else it will prove meaningless and profitless to us.

As I announced this quaint and curious text to you this morning, you doubtless wondered why I had brought such a message as this to you, but I trust you have already been able to read between the lines, and that no one wonders now.

You and I have been out in the wilderness many times, alas! We have been in the lonely and desolate places of life where all was barrenness and desolation of spirit. Day after day we have looked out across the barren wastes, and oh! how we have longed for some oasis in the desert, some resting-place where we could find comfort and refreshment.

The conditions have all been such as suggested need of help. Here is the wilderness, stretching its

dreary wastes of sand and solitude on every side. Here is the toiler and wanderer, weary, sad, discouraged and forlorn, but there is no Tadmor in the wilderness, no resting-place for the weary, no cooling spring for the thirsty, no shade from noon-day's heat, no shelter from wind and storm, and, worse than all, no Solomon in Jerusalem to build a Tadmor for us, no earthly means available to give us help or strength or comfort.

Oh, how much we trust to earthly influences, how much we rely upon human means! When these fail, then we think that all is over and that there is no hope for us. Solomon may not be in power, earthly strength and influence may all have failed, but "God's on His throne, all's well with the world." He is more humane than Solomon, and His measures will prove more efficient than those of any worldly power.

Elijah, fleeing from Jezebel, went a day's journey into the wilderness and was so sad and discouraged, so lonely and forlorn, that he prayed God that he might die. There was no Tadmor for him, he thought, no oasis in the desert, but only loneliness, barrenness and desolation. It was in the desert, though, that the angel came. It was in the desert that the Lord spoke. It was in the desert that God remembered him, though he had forgotten God. Ahab and Jezebel were against him, but the Lord was for him. Solomon, the builder, was dead, but God was on His throne, so the Lord built a

Tadmor in the wilderness for Elijah. He found a resting-place for him. He ministered unto him and comforted and strengthened him, and in the strength of that food and drink which the Lord had provided out there in the barren waste of the wilderness, and the rest and refreshment that he had there gained, Elijah went for forty days and forty nights to the Mount of Horeb, and afterwards was strong enough to stand again before King Ahab and rebuke him and Jezebel for their wickedness and sin.

How is it with you, Christian? Have you been out in the wilderness so sad and weary and forlorn that, like Elijah, you have been praying that you might die? Has there been no oasis, no Tadmor, no help or comfort present? Then it's just been the time when God has had a chance, and I'll warrant, if you needed it like Elijah needed it, God has built a Tadmor in the wilderness for you also, and comforted, strengthened and ministered unto you when you thought no help was possible.

There can't be an oasis in a garden. No Tadmor can be built in a city. You have to get out in the wilderness to have a Tadmor built, and into the waste and desolate places of life if you would appreciate to the full the blessings of an oasis. Man's extremity is God's opportunity. God gets a better chance at you when you're down. When there is no eye to pity and no arm to save, then God's eye will pity and God's arm will save.

Yes, it's a terrible thing to be in the wilderness, to be weary, sad and desolate in the midst of the waste places of life, but if you've never gotten close to God before, if you've never had the intimacy you feel you ought to have, then praise God for the wilderness, for there you will get close to Him and He will get close to you. There, when you think everything has failed and there is no help, no comfort, no deliverance, God will come, and He will build a Tadmor, an oasis, a place of rest and refreshment, and as you bathe your soul in a sweeter intimacy than you have ever had before, you'll thank God even for the desert that thus revealed Him more fully unto you.

Then, again, God realized, like Solomon, that the desert may be a gateway for greater riches both to Himself and His people, therefore, like Solomon, He is ready to build a Tadmor, so that greater riches may be gathered to Himself.

There are many philosophies in this life, but all agree in this, that though "no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous, nevertheless, *afterwards* it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

Poets put it differently, but it is all a statement of the same fact. Tennyson puts it in these pregnant words:

*"Men may rise on stepping-stones  
Of their dead selves to higher things."*

E. W. Wilcox, in those well known lines:

*"It's easy enough to be pleasant  
When life goes along like a song,  
But the man worth while  
Is the man that will smile  
When everything goes dead wrong."*

and J. G. Holland, the philosophic writer of *Bitter Sweet*, puts it still more graphically when he says:

*"Hearts, like apples, are hard and sour  
Till crushed by pain's resistless power,  
And yield their juices, rich and bland  
To nought but sorrow's heavy hand."*

The old Latins also were expressing the same thought and philosophy when they framed the motto: "*Mors Jannua Vitae*," "Death is the Gate of Life," and all is but echoing that other Bible truth where it says: "It is only through much tribulation that ye can enter into the Kingdom of God."

No one can enter into any kingdom of any worth except through much tribulation. The gateway to the Kingdom is hard and black and as forbidding as that which kept the old-time temple of Janus in ancient Rome. It is also always in the desert, always in some lonely, hard and almost inaccessible place where souls are tried even before they reach it.



God wants to use you and me. He wants to get the most out of us for His service. He wants to make us a channel through which not only the riches of His grace may flow, but through which a larger service, a greater work, a richer treasure may flow for humanity—for heaven and God. Therefore, He sends us out into the wilderness as He sent Moses, as He sent John the Baptist, as He sent Paul before his great service, as He sent Christ Himself before He started on His marvelous mission to mankind, and as all these were the richer, the stronger, the better for their wilderness experience, and did more for humanity and God because of it, so may you and I be, if we will only use it as did they.

Don't cry out against the wilderness, therefore. God has sent you out into it that He may build a Tadmor in you there, that He make you a gateway, a channel of blessing for Himself and the world. Ah, in the solitary places may you think of this as I have thought of it. In the discouragement and loneliness of your spirits may you not forget it, as I have tried not to forget, and then you'll understand why God sent you forth, you'll get a new perspective of life and duty, you'll be, please God, the richer, stronger, fuller for your service, and the world will know that you have been alone with God only for greater power and blessing.

Yet again, if I may say it freely, God, like Solo-

mon, loves to build some Tadmors in the wilderness if only for the sheer joy of overcoming the difficult and seemingly impossible.

“Is anything too hard for the Lord?” You have come out into the wilderness with some great trial, some great sorrow, some terrible affliction, and you say, “Yes, I believe in God, I believe that ‘He is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him,’ but the day of miracles is past, and nothing can help me but a miracle, which it is not reasonable for me to expect.”

Dear ones, we are all miracles of grace. You and I could never have been saved unless the Lord, by a miracle of mercy, had turned to us in our distress. Don’t say the day of miracles is past. Look in upon your own experience and know that the Lord who saved you by a miracle of divine grace, is able and *will* deliver you from whatever danger or trial or affliction or sorrow you now are labouring under.

I could not have spoken thus some years ago, but since then I have been face to face with the issues of life and death. I have looked into the shadowy mysteries of eternity as my unwilling feet were led out into the lonely wilderness of life that lies hard by the confines of the kingdom of death. In the shadow and the silence, I have listened to the promptings of my own heart and I have been afraid, and then, out of the shadow and the silence, I have listened to the voice of God, and

I have been delivered from all my fears. Why? Because out of that darkness, that shadow and silence that lay heavy on the wilderness, I heard a voice like the sound of many waters, saying: "Can anything be too hard for the Lord?" and my soul has shouted back in confidence: "Nay, Lord, for to Thee belongeth all power and dominion and glory for ever and ever." And then I waited, in the shadow and the silence, while the Lord wrought a work that men had said was impossible, and now back from the desert, back from the solitude and silence, I have come to tell you that nothing is impossible with God, and that according to your faith it shall be unto you.

Oh, sad, discouraged, weary heart, don't be afraid of the wilderness, don't be afraid of the darkness, or the silence. God is in the midst of it, and He is just waiting to do a work of grace in you or a miracle of blessing that all the world may see He can conquer the most difficult things of life and make you rise superior to them all.

Yes, I know it's weary waiting. I know the desert is cheerless and lonely, but, remember, the desert not only furnishes the oasis, the gateway for greater blessings of power and service, the field of action where God conquers the apparently unconquerable things of life for you and me, but it also furnishes perspective, vision, view such as you cannot get in any other place.

Never before could I appreciate the words of

the poet concerning sunsets, until I saw the sun go down in a blaze of glory behind the Libyan hills and turn the whole desert into a sea of gold, from which a group of palm-trees 'round an oasis rose as graceful and bewilderingly beautiful as the Tree of Life that grows upon the banks of the celestial stream. Then I realized what the poet meant when he said:

*"I have dreamed of sunsets where the sun supine  
Lay rocking on the ocean like a God,  
And threw his weary arms far up the sky,  
And with vermilion-tinted fingers  
Toyed with the long tresses of the evening star.  
And I have dreamed of dreams more beautiful  
than this,  
Dreams that were music, perfume, vision, bliss,  
Till I have stood enwrapped in the quick essence  
of an atmosphere  
That made me tremble to unclothe my eyes,  
Lest I should look on God."*

That's the vision that the desert gives. That's the nearness that it brings you with God. Never mind the darkness, never mind the solitude, never mind the lonely stretches that lie between you and the world, or the things from which you are for a time shut out. At last, across those weary wastes, illuminating that darkness and filling that solitude with the very presence of the Lord, will burst a glorious sunset that will be the harbinger of a newer and a brighter day, and in that fair new


day you will rise from Tadmor, you will step out from the desert, and, hand in hand with God, you will go forth with a stronger faith, a more determined purpose, and a more blessed intimacy with your Lord and Master than ever you have had before.

## VII

### THE PROFIT OF PRAYER

*"What profit should we have if we pray unto him?"*

—Job 21:15.

N every religion that has ever claimed the attention of the world, there has always been two great essentials of primal prominence and power:

First: A personal God.

Second: A means of personal approach unto that God.

Mere fetishism is not sufficient, nor will all embracing pantheism suffice, the god must be personal and supreme. Passive relinquishment to fate's decrees has never satisfied, nor has the blind and heedless following of those decrees availed to still the craving of every heart. The soul must always be able to draw near unto its god and to this personal deity personally cry for help and strength and blessing.

With the Christian this means of approach is through prayer.

*"Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,  
The Christian's native air,  
His passport at the gates of death  
He enters heaven by prayer."*



Notwithstanding all this, however, there are two classes of people who generally do not believe in the efficacy of prayer. First: The ungodly, who have perchance, as far as this world goes, been exceedingly prosperous without it. Second: The disheartened and despairing, whose agonizing prayers sent up amid the gloom and blackness of discouragement have been apparently unanswered.

Light is blinding as well as darkness, however, and it is oftentimes harder for people to see God in the sunlight of prosperity than in the darkness of adversity. They receive the greatest gifts that can be given them in this life, as they think,—honour and power and wealth and fame, and because they have secured them by powers which seem to lie within themselves, they think that they have done it all. They forget that God is the Giver of every good and perfect gift; that nothing which they have received can be of *lasting* benefit or blessing, unless it has come from Him. They forget or rebelliously refuse to give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name, and go forward foolishly trusting in their own powers, which always bring them to the keenest soul hunger and the deepest poverty in spiritual things.

It is this class that Job quotes in the text before us this morning. He speaks of them as flourishing, becoming mighty in power, spending their time in feasting and rejoicing and great luxury. Therefore they say unto God: "Depart from us, for we

desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the almighty that we should serve him, and what profit should we have if we pray unto him? ” It is a cry, alas! that goes up not alone from those who are flourishing, whose eyes are blinded by the sunlight of prosperity, but from those who are despairing, who are groping blindly in the darkness of adversity and trial, whose piteous prayers have long been ascending heavenward unto God, but who now, because of his apparent disregard, are turning away in bitterness and unbelief with this same rebellious cry: What profit should *we* have (have we had) when we pray unto Him? If there be such a soul here this morning, let me say that God has a message for you, and it is a message of joy, not of sorrow, a message of hope, not of despair; a message that should lead you out of the darksome ways in which you have been treading into the very light of His most glorious presence.

In order to separate these two classes which I have mentioned, and clear away, if possible, the despair on the one side, and the self-confidence on the other, let us look a little more closely at that word profit in the text. The word generally suggests to most of our minds the ideas of stocks and bonds, of buying and selling, of trading and getting gain, but there are higher values than these, and without them, no matter what the wealth or power or luxury with which the soul is surrounded, it is still utterly desolate and impoverished.

What is the highest value or profit to a soul in life? The chief pursuit of a man in this life is happiness, is it not? Some are pursuing it after selfish methods, others after unselfish methods, but all are following somehow, some way, that brightly flitting shadow that smiles, allures and beckons, and then points us to its substance which is ever in eternity.

The first thought that comes to us is that wealth will surely bring us this happiness. Will wealth bring it, however? A few years ago one of the New York papers asked that question in a circular letter which they sent out to a number of the wealthiest men in this country,—men whose names are household words to all; and the universal testimony of these men was, that it brought only increased care, increased responsibility, increased worry, without any corresponding increase of happiness.

Sorrow is a visitor to whom even the proudest and grandest can never say: "Not at home." It enters lordly portals unannounced by powdered footman or liveried lackey. It takes its seat at the banquet table and immediately the laughter is changed into tears or sullen silence, the choicest viands into Dead Sea fruit that turns to dust and ashes in the mouth, the richest wines of life into the very gall of bitterness. Ah, there are many breaking hearts today that are striving to hide their sorrow beneath mirthless smiles and silken garments, and many already broken that have

been patched for a time by the light veneer of society, but not so skilfully as to hide the seams and furrows which care has ploughed upon them.

Riches, then, do not bring happiness—that highest profit unto every soul. Will pleasure bring it? No, and for the very same reasons given above. Will prayer bring it? “What profit should we have if we pray unto him?” Can we indeed return a positive hopeful answer to the despairing question of the text? Let us look at it a little more closely before we definitely decide. The chief element in prayer is trust, dependence, confidence in some higher power who will help us and care for us. Happiness is freedom from care, it is trust in the present and confidence for the future. Is there not a wonderful parallelism here? Is not prayer as thus defined the very seal and signet of completest happiness? Some of your hearts, perchance, go back to your childhood days when there was never a thought of care, no worry about the present, no anxiety for the future. Why was it? Ah, it was because there was that sweet voice of faith, and heart of trust in that dear woman whom you called mother. Because there was that big strong man there to whom you looked up in childish confidence and called him “Father.” You knew that as long as that stout heart had life, and those sinewy arms had strength, they would always give themselves for you that you might be kept from sorrow, want and care. That was enough for you, you just

rested in that confidence and laid aside all care for the present and all anxiety for the future. Father was caring for you, he would bear the trials, he would meet the difficulties, he would shield you from all the cares of life. And as you look back upon those joyous care-free days, you say, while tears of tender memory fill your eyes: "Ah, those were the happiest days of my life." Why? Because "father" was bearing your burdens, meeting your difficulties and shielding you from sorrow and care.

It is such a blessed relationship that God enters into with us when we come to Him in prayer. "Like as a father pitieth his children so the Lord pitieth those that fear him." It is such trust and confidence that we can repose in God as we accept of that blessed relationship, and such happiness will we be sure to find in Him because "He careth for us" and will relieve us of our burdens and our sorrows if we will but come to Him in this way. Then, in the midst of the greatest privation that ever gnaws the human heart we can still trustfully sing: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." In the midst of the blackest sorrow that may enshroud our souls, we can still confidently cry: "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear; the Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?" In the midst of all the storms and tempests we can fly to Him who is as "The shadow of a rock in a weary land and a shel-



ter in a time of storm." This will be happiness—the happiness which the child feels in its care-free days. Trust in the present, confidence in the future, because both are under the care of an all-loving Father, with whom we have been brought in sweetest fellowship by prayer. This is "the profit which we should have if we pray unto him"—increase of faith, fatherly protection, help in trial, comfort in sorrow—complete happiness in Him.

Ah, but some one says, there are difficulties in the way. I have prayed to God time after time when the heavens seemed as brass above me. Upon my knees in greatest agony and darkness I have wrestled with the spirit, and still there was naught but darkness and silence and despair. Beside the beds of the dying loved ones, in the midst of the trials and temptations of life, from out the sorest physical affliction I have prayed unto the God of heaven, but still my loved ones have been taken from me, still trials and temptations have come upon me, still I am afflicted even more than I can bear. Say not that God answers the prayers of His people. What profit have I had when I prayed unto Him?

In answer to such a despairing soul, let me say, and let me say it with all of the strength and confidence of my heart, that though there may be many cases of *ungranted* petitions, there never yet was a case of *unanswered* prayer. God may answer by a *negative*, and that, too, for the highest



welfare of our souls. Let us remember that the primary element in all prayer is *trust*, and that trust must be shown in every prayer, either expressed or implied, by those words which Christ uttered in His prayer in the garden: "Not my will, but thine, be done." In that memorable incident when Christ prayed that the cup might pass from Him, was the prayer unanswered? Nay, but though answered in the negative, it was nevertheless *answered* by God, and with the denial we are told an angel appeared unto Him from heaven and strengthened Him. Thus if we will but pray as Jesus did in trustful submission to God's will, then He will either send us an affirmative answer to our prayers, or if a denial, He will send us angels of peace and strength who shall minister unto us and sustain us in our need.

Is it not better to trust to the omniscience of God than to our own weak human judgment? Look back over your past lives and think of the many prayers you have offered up to God which, if answered as you desired, would have wrought ruin in your lives, then tell me, is it not better that God should deal with us according to His divine knowledge, than according to our short-sighted intellects? "Ye ask and receive not," says James, "because ye ask amiss," and it is indeed well for us that we do not receive everything for which we selfishly pray. God knows the best. He knows all of our real needs, and if we will but submit our-

selves to His infallible will and knowledge, then we know that out of the abundance of His love towards us He will supply all our needs. "This is the confidence we have in him," says John, "that if we ask anything according to his will he heareth us."

"But," someone still further argues, "does not Christ say in the fifteenth chapter of John, 'ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you'?" Yes, but that is an extirpated gospel. It is a truth gotten by what we may call claw-hammer exegesis, which wrenches a text from its manifest connection, and holds it up for the misguidance of the world. Look again and read the word by a truer method and you will find that which goes immediately before, bears very forcibly upon this great promise. "If ye *abide in me* and *my words abide in you*," then, "ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." Upon this hangs the promise,—Abiding in Christ, His word abiding in us. Ah, if these two essentials are fulfilled, there is no fear of the fulfilment of the promise, for then we would never ask for those things which were not best for us or according to His word.

Will God indeed, then, heed the prayers of poor weak mortals so insignificant in His sight? No repentant or pleading soul is insignificant in the sight of God. His ear is ever open to their cry. He may tarry long, but His purposes shall never

fail. "A thousand years is with the Lord as one day, and one day as a thousand years." All eternity is one everlasting *Now*. God will answer all of the prayers of His children that are offered unto Him in obedience and faith. "Shall not God avenge his own elect which cry day and night unto him though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily." Such was the poet's (Mrs. Browning's) faith expressed in those lines so full of hope and trust:

*"Unanswered yet, the prayers your lips have pleaded  
In agony of heart these many years?  
Does faith begin to fail, is hope departing,  
And think you all in vain those falling tears?  
Say not the Father hath not heard your prayer;  
You shall have your desire, sometime, somewhere."*

*"Unanswered yet, Faith cannot be unanswered,  
Her feet were firmly planted on the rock.  
Amid the wildest storms she stands undaunted  
Nor quails before the loudest thunder-shock.  
She knows Omnipotence hath heard her prayer  
And cries 'It shall be done! Sometime, somewhere.'"*

Has He not already done so many, many times? Are there not tender trusting hearts here this morning that can testify to the gracious deliverance which prayer has brought them? Ah, I know there are, for God reigns, and His love and mercy are being continually manifested to His people. In our own lives we have experienced it to a greater

or less degree, and in the lives of many dear old saints in Israel round about us, whose abiding trust, tender piety and saintly characters we scarcely ever hope to reach, we have seen the evidences and heard the testimonies of prayer's power and efficacy. A dear old face rises before me now. It is marked by many cares; seamed by many sorrows, but it is a face that is always beautiful to me, for it always reflects to some extent the glory of my Lord. Her life has been spent in the hard school of struggle and privation. Circumstances have not dealt gently with her. Oftentimes she has stood face to face with dire necessity, with crushing sorrows; but she has never flinched, for behind her was an Almighty God and underneath were the everlasting arms. Often have I heard her tell of the extremities to which she has been brought, of the apparently insurmountable difficulties which have hemmed her in, and then of the glorious deliverance which the Lord brought by His almighty power, and she would always close with the confident cry: "The Lord has never yet deserted me, He has always heard my prayers and opened up some way of escape, and I know He always will." I know that life, I know most intimately that character:—She is my *Mother*. Can I doubt the promises of God? Can I doubt the efficacy of prayer as I see its power exercised in her life, that crowned the closing years of her service with trust and beauty and

honour and glory? Can you doubt the power of prayer as you see its blessings in thousands round about you, and feel them deep within your own soul? It has lightened the burdens of the multitude; quenched the bitterness of despair, brought light and joy and peace where nought but sorrow reigned before.

Should Christian hearts, then, be strangers to this sweet exercise? Should Christian homes be silent as to prayer? Ah, not only in the sanctuary, but in individual hearts and homes, should this breath of faith go up to God. Morning by morning, or evening by evening should the family meet in this blessed exercise and ask God's blessings upon the day's work done, or guidance in the duties forth to which they go. It would be a strength and blessing to the parents' hearts in the midst of their care and their responsibility. It will be like a sheet-anchor to those young souls whom God has given you, holding them fast in all the storms of life, or if they should break away from their early moorings, then like a beacon would it stand to guide them safely back to port. The old home, the family altar, the voice of prayer,—how much they mean and how deep their influence upon the wayward and the wandering! The old Church, God's holy day, the means of grace in praise and prayer, how much these mean to the weary, the burdened and oppressed! How much this blessed intercourse with God means to every heart, whether

exercised in public or in private, for where prayer is offered God is there ready to hear and bless.

*" More things are wrought by prayer than this  
world dreams of;*

*Wherefore let thy voice rise like a fountain  
night and day*

*For what are men better than sheep or goats*

*That nourish a blind life within the brain*

*If knowing God they lift not hands of prayer*

*Both for themselves and those who call them  
friend.*

*For so the whole round earth is every way*

*Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."*




## VIII

### TURNING ONE'S FOOT FROM THE SABBATH

*"If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy Father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."*

—Isaiah 58:13, 14.

 HIS text is one of the most notable, all-inclusive and effective, on the Sabbath question, in the whole Word of God. Together with the Fourth Commandment it forms the greatest stronghold for Sabbatarianism in the Scriptures, and with the adjoined texts in the marginal references, it proves itself absolutely impregnable.

The text itself is somewhat involved because of its length and the fact that it is all in one sentence—one of the longest in the whole Bible—but it lends itself readily to analysis, and by that analysis we find its whole content made easily understandable and plain.

Divide it, therefore, into its three constituent

parts and you will find it emphasizes: First, What the Sabbath really is; second, How it should be observed, and third, What is promised in such observance.

What is the Sabbath? In the text, the Lord speaks of its as "My Holy Day." It is, therefore, something that belongs not to man, not to the world, but to God. It is something that He has made peculiarly sacrosanct. It is something set apart in a most solemn way. It is, therefore, something that we should observe with all holy solemnity and awe.

If we have any doubt on the matter, the opening words of the text ought to very definitely clear them away. The words are: "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my Holy Day," etc. At first this passage seems paradoxical and self-contradictory in the extreme. It seems as though God wants us to turn entirely away from the Sabbath in the first clause and then wants us to observe it rigourously in the second, but the seeming inconsistency is easily explained if we turn to the marginal reference and refer to Exodus 3:5, where God calls out to Moses, in front of the burning bush, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground!" The expression here, therefore, that we are to "turn away our foot from the Sabbath," means that it is so holy a thing that we are not to trample upon it; we are not to profane it; we

are not to ride roughshod over it. We must approach it reverently, piously and with holy awe—as barefoot pilgrims approach some holy shrine.

The Fourth Commandment also emphasizes this same peculiar holiness of this blessed day. It is the only commandment that uses the word “Holy,” and gives us the best reason for its observance—and for the observance of all the others—than all the rest of the Decalogue. Holiness is all-embracing. Let a man have this in his soul and he will not try to abrogate any of the commandments that form the basic principle of all right living and right thinking. He will not cast opprobrium on the Sabbath Day, nor seek to minimize its just and righteous restraints, as so many of the ungodly and so many spiritual iconoclasts are doing, or trying to do, today. If we are holy, we will keep the whole law. We will see to it that God is kept supreme; that we bow not before any graven image; that we do not take the name of the Lord our God in vain; that we honour our fathers and our mothers; that we do not kill, nor commit adultery, nor steal, nor bear false witness, nor covet anything. Holiness covers it all!

You see, then, how important is this first division of the text. The Sabbath is a Holy Day. We must never forget that. Forgetting it, we will be lost in the bog of endless evasions and quiddities. Remembering it, we will enjoy a calm

and quiet mind at peace with conscience and with the world.

Oh, the peace and ecstasy of this Holy Sabbath calm! Do you not remember it? Have the paths of memory become so weed-grown that you cannot retrace your steps to the days when it seemed as though you knew, by the very atmosphere, that the day was different,—that it was God's Holy Day? It seems to me that were I lost in the woods for weeks and had lost all trace of time I would know when the Sabbath came around! It seems to me that were I without a knowledge of the day of the week from any calendar or mental suggestion, even in a great city, I would know when the Sabbath Day arrived! There is a different atmosphere, let the scoffing and incredulous say what they will. There is a hush, a calm, a quiet that no other day brings.

Yet some would change all this and have the holy calm for only half the day and then let the rest be filled with raucous shouts of levity and ribaldry and still call it "Holy." You cannot bismirch a fair, white garment to half its length and call it clean. You cannot fill half a book with pious meditations and then fill the rest with indecencies and call it pure. Neither can you give the first half of God's Holy day to the worship of God and the rest to sports, or business, or pleasure of any kind and call it "God's Holy Day."

James I. tried it in England, and published a

“Book of Sports,” which he commanded to be read in the churches after the morning service, and ordered the people to indulge in these same sports during the rest of the day, but the Puritans, both laity and clergy, would not submit, even though the king ordered it. He said he would “make them conform or harry them out of the land.” He “harried them out of the land,” but he could not make them conform to such sacrilegious use of God’s Holy Day! He “harried” them to Holland and then, thank God, he “harried” them over here, and we, their natural descendants, will never conform to such a use of this Holy Sabbath—even in these degenerate times.

Archbishop Laud, backed by Charles I. in his reign, tried it, and all the power of the Church as well as the state could not make the people conform to this sacrilegious system. “The Book of Sports” was one of the causes of the downfall of Charles I., as well as Archbishop Laud. People realized that it was not a question of religion alone, but also of tampering with the basic elements of economic and civil liberty, that would destroy them and the nation which they loved.

Why, then, try to revive a system that failed in the seventeenth century? Why invoke again the Church and State to help it now, as then? It will as certainly fail now as then. All the authorities of Church and State cannot make a thing right that is declared wrong by God’s holy law, and the

people will never consent to submit to it, though all the powers of kings and princes and the primates of the Church are summoned to its aid.

“This day is holy unto the Lord.” That is the fiat of the Almighty concerning the Sabbath. That covers all objections and embraces all arguments both for and against. I am not here to argue concerning economic and industrial necessities. They are all embraced in this universal word “Holy.” I am not here to declaim further against Sunday “sports.” They also are disposed of by that same blessed word. The most ardent golfer would hardly claim that Sunday golf was a “holy sport.” The most highly paid baseball star would certainly not claim that baseball was “Holy unto the Lord.” The prize-fighter would certainly lose what little claim for intelligence he has if he should claim prize-fighting was a game that was “holy”! Why, then, seek to profane the Sabbath with such anachronisms of the day?

The whole trouble with the opponents of the Sabbath is that they will not squarely face the issue. They know that all these things are true. They know that the day is peculiarly and sacredly holy, but they try to eliminate the deeper meaning of that word by subterfuges and evasions. They are trying to change the very spelling of the word to suit their own ends. They want to spell holy with an “i” and make holyday read “holiday.” Some of them would suggest that it be spelled with



an "e" and make holy day read "holey day," as they try to shoot the Sabbath full of holes out of which they can crawl. If there is any change of the spelling to be made I would suggest that it be spelled "wholly," that all may know the day is to be wholly observed, and not half and half, as these Sabbath desecrators desire—for any day "wholly" given to God is a "Holy" day unto the Lord.

Now let us look at the second division of this text: How the Sabbath is to be observed.

Most of the injunctions are put in the negative form, but it strengthens their force—even as in the commandments—and makes the injunction more powerful and exacting.

First, and most definitely, we are not to do our own pleasure on this day, but God's will.

Second, we are to make the Sabbath honourable, or honoured, as well as holy, and a delight to God.

Third, we are to honour God on that day and not try to honour other people by fetes, benefits and special performances.

Fourth, we are not to do our own ways on this day, but God's ways.

Fifth, we are not to speak our own words on such a day, but speak the words of God.

The only places where we are likely to speak the words of God and not our own are in the Church and in our own private Bible study. The whole matter of Sabbath desecration lies in the non-observance of these two things. If we were a

Bible-reading and Church-going people there would be little trouble over Sabbath observance. It is because we do not want to read our Bibles and do not want to go to church that the Sabbath Day is desecrated openly and is less and less observed. We know our newspapers better than our Bibles! We know the names of our baseball, tennis and golf stars a great deal better than we know the names of the patriarchs, prophets and apostles of the Lord! We do not want to go to church on Sunday, and we want every kind of an excuse and encouragement for staying away. Therefore, many Christians even encourage Sunday baseball, Sunday tennis and Sunday golf, as well as the Sunday newspaper. They want to hear their "own words," put in the language of the umpire or the sporting page, rather than the words of God. They want an excuse for not going to church, therefore they take the Sunday newspaper—that would take a week to read all through—and claim that they do not get through their paper in time to get to church!

Time was when the Sunday newspaper had a smaller circulation than the daily. Time was when the Sabbath reading was the religious press that told of the things of God and the Church. Time was when that reading on a Sabbath afternoon was varied with God's own Word. Now, however, we want to hear our "own words"—the words of the street, the words of business, the words of the

sporting editor on God's Holy Day. Religious papers have been replaced by the Sunday newspaper. God's Holy Word has been replaced by the magazine sections of our Sunday press. The Catechism has been replaced by the comic strip.

What can you expect of the rising generation if they are fed on such meat as this? What can you expect of the city and state and nation if it turns its desecrating feet into the Sabbath and tramples down all sense of fitness, decency and order? Only what God's Word definitely and clearly sets forth, and it is to this we must now turn our attention.

In this third section of the text the language changes from the negative to the positive. If we observe the Sabbath aright these things are definitely promised:

First, We shall delight ourselves in the Lord, instead of in our own ways.

Second, We shall ride upon the high places of the earth, instead of on the low plane that we have been travelling.

Third, We shall be fed with the heritage of Jacob—which we know to have been great in both material and spiritual things.

Now, these positive things that are stated, make the opposite of them—that are not stated—all the more emphatic. If we do not do these things, then the woes that shall come upon us will be terrible indeed.

The words that are here used were, of course, spoken first to the Jews through the mouth of Isaiah, inspired by the direct Word of the Lord. There were other prophets of that time, also, however, and others that were to come after, all of whom were directly led, as was Isaiah, by the power and inspiration of God, and it is in the totality of their messages that we get the full quota of the plan and purpose of God.

Jeremiah was a contemporary of Isaiah, taking up the message when the aged prophet was compelled to lay it down. In any ordinary reference Bible you will find references from this passage in Isaiah, to Jeremiah 17:21-27, and then from that passage you are referred to Nehemiah 13:15-18—that gives the totality of this message concerning the Sabbath.

In this passage in Jeremiah (17:21-27) both the positive and negative sides are given. As I have already mentioned the positive in Isaiah, I will only quote here the negative, as given by Jeremiah, in order to make both sides clear and plain:

“ Thus saith the Lord. Take heed to yourselves and bear no burden on the Sabbath Day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem. Neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath Day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the Sabbath Day as I commanded your fathers. . . . But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the Sabbath Day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath Day, then I will kindle a fire in the gates

thereof and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem and it shall not be quenched."

This was on the eve of Jerusalem's fall under Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah was the prophet at Jerusalem who was trying to turn his people from their folly, as he saw, by the revelation of God, just where their apostasy was leading them. But they would not hearken. They took no heed to his words. He was only another religious enthusiast who was mouthing a lot of idiocies that could not come to pass! They did come to pass, however, and Jeremiah lived to see the days of their fulfilment, as he sees Zedekiah, the last of the kings of Judah, led away by Nebuchadnezzar, with a ring in his nose, captive to Babylon with all the rest of Judah, and Jerusalem totally destroyed.

Lest, however, the people may forget why this captivity and destruction was forced upon them, God raises up Nehemiah to bring it to their minds after Cyrus has released them from a seventy years' bondage and returned them to their own land. Thus we are now referred to Nehemiah 13:15-18, where Nehemiah, standing by the gates that had been destroyed by fire and in the midst of the city that had been overthrown, cries now, as he sees their restoration, and sees how soon the people have forgotten and are doing the same things:

"In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine

presses on the Sabbath and bringing in sheaves and lading asses . . . and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. . . . Then I contended with the nobles of Judah and said unto them: What evil thing is this that ye do and profane the Sabbath Day? Did not your fathers thus and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath."

The case is complete upon the negative side. If we do not observe the Sabbath to keep it holy, then God will surely visit us with wrath and destruction as He did Israel for the same thing. There can be no question about it. What God was, He is! What He did, He does! You cannot turn back a clock from midnight to morning and say it is noon. You cannot turn aside the facts of history and say they are not so—unless you are ostrich-like in your nature and mentality!

Turn, now, in the closing of the message, to the positive side again and take positive and negative together. Did you ever know a nation that was a God-fearing, Sabbath-loving nation that was not prosperous? Did you ever know a Sabbath-desecrating nation that was not backward and failing? Isaiah said that if Judah hallowed this Day of God it should ride upon the high places of the earth and partake of the heritage of Jacob. Jeremiah said, "If ye will hallow the Sabbath . . . then this city shall remain forever." But Judah would not believe; Jerusalem would



not heed and it was destroyed because of Sabbath profanation!

Do not say it will not occur again. Look at the European countries that have been Sabbath desecrators in our own day. Have they prospered? Have they escaped? What evils have befallen them! What misery and wretchedness and defeat have they not suffered, even in the last few years!

The nation that obeys the Word of God, that fulfils the Law of God, that honours the Sabbath, hallows the Sabbath, will always be great. A nation's assurance as to its future is not based upon the large amount of business it does through the week, but upon the small amount it does on Sunday!—or any other Sabbath Day that they may rigourously observe. Let no one here try to quibble about Sunday and the Sabbath! I have tried to set that forth most plainly by saying that any day that is "wholly" given to God is God's "Holy" Day. We must remember our Sabbath Day to keep it holy—whatever day it be! We must give God the seventh of our time, and that is little enough when we remember all that He has given us!

What is it that has made this nation great? It is the fact that it was founded in righteousness toward God. It is the fact that our Puritan forefathers came here because they would not countenance the profanations of God's Holy Day by James I. and Charles I., aided and abetted as they

were even by the primates of the Church. It is the fact that here they established, in all its sanctity, the Christian Sabbath and observed it in all solemnity and awe.

Laugh at the Puritan as you will, but remember that save for them and the principles you now laugh at you would not be where you are, nor enjoying so great prosperity. They founded this land of ours because of Sabbath desecration and religious intolerance in their own land. That is the very reason for our being.

“If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth.” They believed God’s Word. They hallowed the Sabbath Day and kept it holy. That is the reason we are riding upon the high places of the earth today. That is the reason we are prosperous. That is the reason all the nations of the earth are turning unto us and looking for our help and direction in world affairs. God grant we may continue to keep the Christian Sabbath holy unto the Lord! God grant we may continue to keep all the commandments in which this lies imbedded! If we do not, we cannot hope to escape that “stigma of human dishonour” spoken of by ex-Ambassador E. C. O’Brien in his pamphlet under that caption just published as a warning to America. If we do not, “No one can tell how sudden a calamity shall bury all our glory in profound

obscurity," as Daniel Webster also once warned our land. But, if we do!—then, as Webster said, "This nation shall go on prospering and to prosper!" If we do!—there shall be fulfilled in us that which God promised and fulfilled in Joshua: "Then thou shalt make thy way prosperous and then shalt thou have good success!"

## IX

### WHEN I BECAME A MAN<sup>1</sup>

*"When I became a man, I put away childish things."*

—I Corinthians 13:11.

**W**HEN is it that a boy becomes a man?—a girl, a woman? That there is such a definite time all of us who can look back on our own lives can clearly testify. Longfellow puts it rather indefinitely for the maiden in those well-known lines:

*"Standing, with reluctant feet,  
Where the brook and river meet,  
Womanhood and childhood fleet."*

For the young man, however, Samuel Johnson states it very positively in these trenchant words: "Towering in the confidence of twenty-one! "

The difficulty with these statements is that one is too uncertain and the other too assertive.

I have known many a young man who was still a "cub," untamed and immature, at twenty-one; and I have known many a girl who never seemed to know where "the brook and river" did meet!

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<sup>1</sup> Delivered from Radio Station WAHG.

When does the boy become a man and the girl, a woman? Well, first, I would say that—*if not before*—a woman is born with every girl's first baby and a man—the first time a young fellow learns that he is a father!

Parenthood is undoubtedly a triple birth. Not only is a baby born, but a man and a woman are born at the same time! Parenthood breeds responsibility, responsibility breeds maturity, and maturity breeds manhood and womanhood to develop both.

But even this definition is *too* definite, too fixed and inelastic. I have seen mature men and women developed before they reached the age of parenthood, and many that we know, who have passed that age, have reached matured manhood and womanhood without ever being parents.

When, then, does the boy become a man; the girl, a woman? The definition that will fit all cases is this: When responsibility for others, as well as self, is laid upon the heart, the soul, the conscience of youth—then is a man born in the soul of the boy and a woman in the soul of the girl.

Maturity knows no age limits. It comes late in life for some; it comes—ah, the pity of it!—early in life for others. Responsibility is the seed; from it springs the manhood and the womanhood of the race!

Have you ever seen the “flapper” strain in those we call “Little Mothers”?—those children

who, before parenthood comes upon them, have to be responsible for their younger brothers and sisters while their mothers toil to feed them? Have you ever seen the "Lounge Lizard" type in those young men who, early in life, have had thrown upon them the care of a sick father or a widowed mother? These are the ones whom responsibility for others develops early and makes them men and women before their time. The pity of it! Oh, the pity of it! Let the wild, irresponsible youth of today think of these at times and it will surely give them pause—if they have hearts beneath their care-free, gay and thoughtless exteriors, as I feel sure they have. Cheated of childhood by cruel circumstances! Made old before their time! Young in years; aged in experience! Youth's resilience killed by responsibility! Such a condition is enough to make angels weep!

Even this condition, however, has its advantages over senseless, wild, ungoverned youth. It was Seneca who said: "It is better to be a dead lion than a live ass!" I would infinitely rather be a dead hero, whatever my age, than, alive, a silly fool. Responsibility, thank God, does not often kill. It develops—by hard processes, perhaps—but it develops! Development spells achievement; achievement spells success; success spells reputation and reputation spells—Destiny!

Think of the success, the reputation and the destiny of many who knew no care-free days in child-



hood or young manhood or young womanhood! Think of "The Americanization of Edward Bok!" A Holland immigrant who, as a boy, was laughed at because he did not know our language; who, as a boy, had to sell papers on the street to help his mother and father in their need; who, as a boy, had to haul boxes for his mother's fire and baskets of clothes for his mother's wash-tub; who, as a boy, started in as a wage-earner, not to earn "pocket money" or to buy fine clothes, but to help support the home in the necessities of life, and then—think how he developed! In spite of laughs and jeers; in spite of poverty; in spite of hard manual labour, he earned not only money for that home, but earned an education, earned a competence, earned a fortune, earned success and reputation that has made him a national and international figure, earned, at last, a knighthood from his native land. That is the destiny that unselfish, hard-working youth achieves. That is the development that responsibility for others gains. Hail, Sir Edward! Hail to every boy who is ready to take responsibility for others whenever the need arises! Boys, as well as

*"Men may rise on stepping-stones  
Of their dead selves to higher things."*

I am appealing, remember, not for boys to become men *before* their time, nor for girls to become women before *their* time, but I am appealing for

both to be *ready* to slough off their ease, their pleasure, their irresponsibility whenever they *see* the need, and not go selfishly forward thinking only of themselves. It is this unwillingness to think of others, to take the responsibility *for* others, that makes youth selfish, that keeps it immature, that retards its development into the higher, holier, greater things of life.

"But," some say, "I do work. I have been working for years, working hard at my task and uncomplaining." Yes, but for whom? For others or yourself? Some go to work when they ought to be in school—go to work when their parents *beg* them to *stay* in school—go to work when there is no necessity for it, and take work and money away from those who need it. Why? To help their fathers and mothers keep the family? No. To buy better clothes, sometimes, than their fathers or mothers wear; to buy theatre tickets, dance hall tickets, cabaret tickets and, as they call it, "Have a good time generally."

This is not a very high endeavour nor a noble aim. This shows that you have not yet become a man. "When I became a man, I put away childish things." It is not only childish and silly, but positively selfish and criminal for a child to go to work when there is no need of it, or—going to work—to keep the money for himself or herself and their own pleasures. It is this that breeds "Flaming Youth," that fills cabarets and jazz palaces,

that debauches youth and makes it "The Dangerous Age."

"When I became a man, I put away childish things." If you are old enough to be a man, in the name of all that is sensible—be one! If you are too old to go to school and *must* work, then, contribute to the family exchequer—even if it does not need it! Your father—if he is the right kind of a father—can handle your money a great deal better than you, and will repay it all, with interest, in the years to come. No boy has a right to spend his money on foolishness—even if he *has* earned it. No parent should allow a boy to keep his own money, if he is not mature enough to know how to use it! If you *must* work, pay your money into the family exchequer, like your father does, and learn its worth by what it does in feeding and clothing not only *you*, but those whom you are supposed to love and cherish. Responsibility for others! This will develop you! This will make a man of you! This will make you put away "childish things."

Think of girls also who have become women through this same responsibility for others. Think of Joan of Arc! Do you know that she died before she was twenty? Do you know that at seventeen she felt the burden of a nation upon her shoulders? Do you know that at nineteen she had saved that nation, crowned a king and made another king retire in defeat? Do you know that she was

burned at the stake for her convictions, while still in her "teens"?

We speak learnedly, pedantically and pedagogically of the "teen" age, as though it were the age of foolishness and silliness of which nothing could be expected, yet Jenny Lind was singing in grand opera while still in her "teens." Augustina, the Maid of Saragossa, was also in her "teens" when she saved her city from the enemy, in 1808—even as the immortal Joan had saved France before her, while still in what the pedagogues call "the teen age."

These heard the call of duty, of responsibility—of responsibility for others. They put away childish things. They became men, women. Responsibility developed them, matured them,—made men out of boys and women out of girls, so that they made themselves, as well as all the world, greater, grander, holier and the better by their deeds.

Young men! Young women! I call upon you, by all the necessities of the times, by the needs of your own homes, the needs of the city, the state, the nation, the needs of the Church and humanity at large, "put away childish things." Be big enough, mature enough and strong enough to develop yourselves and the times in which you live. It is a young man's, a young woman's age. Every position in life—even the highest—is now open to ambitious young manhood and womanhood if you

will only assume its responsibilities. Cease dawdling, idling, pleasure loving for itself alone. Realize that "life is real, life is earnest," and be assured that the crown is always ready for the conqueror when the goal is won.

If "the child is father of the man," it is no less true that the girl is mother of the woman. You can be your own ancestors if you will! Aye, you can be your own progenitors! Don't let the bubble of life allure you too much; it will burst at the first pinprick of adversity. Don't grasp at the shadow and lose, forever, the substance. Play, pleasure, relaxation, all have their place and should be followed with eagerness as an *avocation*, but your *vocation*, your *real* business in life, is to make the world better and people happier by your contact.

Birth-pangs are no less hard in bearing a man or a woman into the world than in bearing a baby. If we are going to make the boy the father of the man, the girl the mother of the woman, we must expect to bear some pain and suffering, some hardship and danger, but the result will be worth all it cost. Take the lessons of the ages, the examples of the men and women who have gone before, and show the world how you can make a man of yourself, a woman of yourself, when you put away childish things and get down to the *real* business of life.

And is there not lesson here for the older of us? Yea, verily! The first is that we need to have a



little more sympathy and toleration for youth! Age cannot rightly estimate the so-called follies of youth without putting itself in the place of youth,—without seeing as they see, without going back to the time when we were young ourselves.

Let it be candidly admitted that there is grave ground for anxiety and apprehension, yet, in the same breath, we must admit that the present-day hysteria has greatly magnified the restlessness and unconventionality of youth, and that age has sadly lost its perspective. Why, it would seem—to hear some old people talk—that they had been *born* old! It would seem that some had never had any youth and did not know what it was. It would seem as though some had never gazed over the fence and corral of youth and longed, coltlike, to kick up their heels on the open plain of life that stretched so wide beyond the barrier!

Youth is necessarily a time of exuberance, a lack of self-control. There is a spring in the step, a glint in the eye, a warmth in the blood, a prodigality of exuberance that kicks at confinement.

*“In youth the heart exults and sings,  
The pulses leap, the feet have wings.”*

God forbid that you or I should strive to curb, in any way, the *natural* and *lawful* exuberance of youth. It is not only the joy of life for *them*, but it is the hope of the *future* for *us*, and for the whole human race. That is the reason that I have ap-



pealed to them as I have. They have the strength, the power, the opportunity within themselves, aided by the power of God and the experience of all the ages, to make far more of themselves than we have ever made of ourselves. They can profit by our mistakes. They can take us as "many great and terrible examples," and build far more wisely than we, if they will.

Let us not, therefore, be afraid of youth's exuberance, but make the *most* of it—aye, the *best* of it!—knowing that it is natural, healthy, productive, developing, and that it will be displaced, nay, transmuted in due time to sober, earnest purpose, to high endeavour and noble aim, to a period when the erstwhile youth will proudly cry: "When I became a man, I put away childish things!"

And again I ask: Is there no lesson here for the older of us? Alas, yes! for there is still such a thing as "*Second Childhood*," and many who are supposed to be mature often go back to "childish things."

O, the immaturity of maturity! O, the childishness of old age! Here is a man who has never advanced because, as he says, "he never had a chance." And here is Otto Kahn, the great banker, who says *his* first promotion came from being the best "stamp licker" among the office boys of his time! Here is a woman, in good, comfortable circumstances, fretting herself sick because she has not the same social position as the Vanderbilts, and

yet the Vanderbilts came up from being the family of a ferryman on Staten Island!

Here is a man who came to see me about separating from his wife. I asked if there had been any trouble, and misconduct, and scandal. "No," he said, "only incompatibility." Incompatibility! How many crimes are committed in thy name! Why should a husband and wife be separated because of incompatibility? Brothers are often incompatible—very incompatible at times—but you never hear of them separating because of incompatibility! Sisters are incompatible—very much so about beaus and bonnets and dresses and dances—but that does not cause them to break up the home and go and choose another sister! Why, then, should husbands and wives feel they must be separated because they cannot agree on everything? What a strange world it would be if we all *did* agree on everything! Is it not time for all such to put away these childish things and be genuinely and maturely happy?

Here is a wife who came to me, crying because her husband was not demonstrative! She felt she could not stand it. She felt it was her *duty* as a wife to separate from him because he was not carrying the honeymoon into the dining-room! Poor wife! Poor husband! I'll venture there are many husbands who feel particularly sorry for *that* husband—because they are so much like him. All husbands cannot be demonstrative.

Some of them don't know how! It isn't in their natures, and yet they sometimes love more, deep down in their hearts, than the mercurial, gushing kind.

Mark Twain tells us, in his Autobiography, that he never could respond to all his wife's warmth of affection, though he loved her dearly and for thirty-six years they lived a most happy life together—a love-pact that was only broken by death! He tells us that, in his father's family, he never once saw a member of that family kiss another, except on a death-bed! Therefore, when his wife poured out all the warmth of her affection on him, and he could not respond, he felt, he tells us plaintively, like the rock of Gibraltar amid the waves of a summer sea! She, loving, tender and caressing, he, grim, inarticulate and unresponsive! Yet, *they* were not divorced or separated—except by death—but lived genuinely happy together, their natures different—their hearts as one.

Why not put away "childish things"? You can't make men or women over to suit your taste. You can't tell husband or wife *how* they must show their affection. Make up your minds to take natures as they are. Think of your agreements, not of your differences. Put away childish things. If you do, be assured, there will be many, a great many more happy homes than there are today.


Youth *and* maturity!—I am speaking to you to-day! All classes are "listening in." Have I not

touched the core of your trouble in many cases? How many mature people are really childish! How many young people refuse to grow up! How many homes, business ties, social ties and friendships have been ruined by "childish things"! The differences that separate people are generally trivial. Life is most often wrecked upon the rock of inconsequentiality. Let us see first things first, and do first things first. Don't let us be content with either the froth or the scum or the dregs of life. The top is effervescent or offensive; the bottom is sediment or slime. The true substance of life lies in between, pure, sparkling and health-giving to the heart and soul. Let us realize that we are *men* and *women*; that we have a *real* and *serious* mission in life; that we must co-operate, must work together, live together, succeed together—in spite of differences; that we must help the world and bless the world together by our mutual love and labour. Then, indeed, we shall have "put away childish things." Then, indeed, we shall have reached that high and holy place where we shall all come "in the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto the *perfect* man (the *perfect* woman) unto the *measure* of the stature of the fulness of *Christ*."

## X

### YOUNG ABSALOM

*"Is the young man Absalom safe?"—II Samuel 18:32.*

HERE is no holier love within the human heart, except the love of God, than love for one's own offspring. There is no more sacred duty imposed upon mankind than the training of the children God has given. It is not a duty that can be delegated unto others. Governesses, teachers and special instructors in mental, physical and spiritual things may relieve you largely of the work, but they cannot relieve you of the responsibility. God has placed in your hands, the care of those young souls, and for their ultimate weal or woe, by the training of those early years, you will largely be responsible. With some there is an ever-present consciousness of that responsibility; with others, though love be by no means lacking, the realization does not seem to come until it is forever too late.

Before the gateway of the City of Mahanaim there sits an example of the latter class,—a man who had unbounded love in his heart, but not a due sense of his responsibility in the training of an impulsive and wayward son.

David loved Absalom. The whole trouble was, indeed, he loved "not wisely but too well." Love had blinded his eyes to his responsibility. Loving thus, he had indulged his son. Indulgence unrestrained had led to license. License had brought, not liberty, but anarchy, and anarchy brought, at length, inevitable chaos and destruction. David may sit at the gate of the city asking of the messenger, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" but it is a vain question. He could not be safe under such conditions. His whole upbringing had been wrong, and now, in the midst of his unnatural rebellion against his father, the end comes in a bitter, disgraceful death, and David goes up to his room over the gate, crying: "O, my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee; O, Absalom, my son, my son!"

History repeats itself, and its logic is inexorable. Certain causes under certain circumstances produce equally certain events. What has been, therefore, will be, since nature's law of cause and effect is unchangeable, and human nature is the same wherever it is found.

"Is the young man Absalom safe?" Fathers, examine your hearts in the light of your responsibility tonight. Have you been heedless, thoughtless and indulgent without restraint? Then you cannot say he is safe under such conditions, for the inexorable logic of history says it will lead to license and rebellion; to bitterness and death. Re-



member Aaron's sons and their shameful end. Remember Eli's children and the consequences of a foolish home indulgence. Remember David and his bitter cry at the death of wayward Absalom.

Indulgence never yet made a man. God may have given you, in your son, the very best raw material for the making of a man, but indulgence will never develop him, even out of that material. Indulgence pampers, enervates, emasculates and unmans him. It may make a manikin, but it will never make a man. Would you have your son grow up a hardy, strong and resolute soul? Don't give him all the money he wants and then think you have done your duty by him. Many a father thinks he is a most exemplary parent when he does this, but oftentimes he is damning rather than developing that soul. Throw him more on his own resources. Give him responsibility to bear. Make him know the greater appreciation of things gained by effort rather than by indolence. Don't send him out into the world with means to indulge his folly, but rather with power to restrain himself and conquer the evil that confronts him.

There are some fathers, however, who are ready to say: "O, my boy is not really a bad fellow. He is a little wild and thoughtless now, it is true, but he is only sowing his wild oats." Hear England's sage and seer, the philosophic Ruskin, as he replies to that extenuating plea: "I have no patience with people who talk about the thought-

lessness of youth. I had infinitely rather hear of the thoughtlessness of old age! When a man has done his work and nothing can be materially altered in his fate, let him forget his toil and jest with his fate, if he will, but what excuse can you find for the wilfulness of thought at the very time when every crisis of fortune hangs upon your decision. A youth thoughtless when all the happiness of his home forever depends on the chances and passions of an hour! A youth thoughtless when the career of all his days depends on the opportunity of a moment! A youth thoughtless when his every action is a foundation-stone for future conduct and every imagination of his heart a fountain of life or death! Let him be thoughtless in any after years rather than now. There is only one place, indeed, where a man can be nobly thoughtless, and that is his death-bed. Nothing should be ever left to be done there."

"Is the young man Absalom safe?" Not if he is living thus and you are thus excusing him. Is he thoughtless? Make him think. Show him the infinite sweep of all life's possibilities and opportunities. Is he sowing "wild oats"? Make him look into the future and know that "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." If he is sowing "wild oats" now, he must reap "wild oats" some time, and bitter will be the harvest, both for him and for you. It makes no difference, though he may at last "reform," the same inex-

orable law holds, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Saved from the bitter reaping in eternity through repentance and faith in God, he yet must reap here in his own body, mind and spirit the fruits of his sin and folly.

You know something of what this means, perhaps. You have been out in the world. You know the bitterness and sorrow which wild-oat sowing brings, therefore you are the best to warn him. Out yonder in the world the dishonest business methods will entice him. The gambling hell and drinking will lure him with all their power. The dissolute practices of society will use all of their witcheries to entrap him, and he will need all of the courage, all of the steadfastness, all of the judicious warning and encouragement which you can give him from your knowledge of the world. Tell him, out of the depths of your experience, of what he must beware. Make a confidant of him. Make a companion of him. Don't say "go" to him, urging him forward to paths you have never trod yourself, but say, rather, "Come," as you lead out from the dangers of the world to the paths of right living and right doing which you desire to have him walk with you.

Would you have the picture of a model father set before you? It is that of the brave Æneas with old Anchises upon his shoulders and leading by the hand his son Iulus from amid the ruins of burning Troy. Out from the ruins of this world's sin and

folly may you also lead your Absalom. He is in danger yonder. He needs direction. May yours be the hand to lead him out in safety.

One other thing: Remember, you are a hero and a model for at least one young heart. God pity the father that is not! Upon your life that other will almost unconsciously mould itself. He is looking to you for example. "My father," says the little boy to his play-fellow, "knows more than anyone else in all the world! He is the strongest man in all the world! He can do anything! I'm going to be just like my father!" And the other youngster says just the same thing! The thing that father does must surely be all right, therefore, he will be just as likely to follow the bad as the good.

We often repeat with solemn emphasis that Bible truth which says "the iniquities of the fathers shall be visited upon the children," but we do not often stop to think of its reflex influence upon the fathers. The sin which you commit may seem but trivial in your eyes, but seen in the life of your son, it looks enormous. No father is so unnatural as to be utterly callous and indifferent as to the wrongdoing of his son. No matter how sinful he may be himself, he does not wish his son to imitate his wickedness, and if he does, it cannot but strike a keen pang to his heart.

Look at it, if you will, from still another viewpoint. The sin which you commit as father may be but momentary, and being as quickly repented

of, be forgiven, but making an impression at the time of its commitment upon the boy's receptive heart, it may remain there, be continually indulged in, and never be repented of. The father saved, the son lost, and lost through the father's wrong example! What a terrible condition would that be for any father to face, either in time or in eternity! That was David's experience, however, and that was the reason for that exceeding great and bitter cry. David had sinned and Absalom, imitating him, had sinned also. David had repented of his folly and God had accepted his repentance; Absalom never repented, and went to his death unforgiven. The father saved, the son lost, and lost through the father's sin. Ah, that was what broke his father's heart and sent him to his room over the gate, crying: "O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee; O Absalom! my son, my son!"

"Is the young man Absalom safe?" He may be yet in the home. Remember, then, how much there is in environment and example. Nature always adapts herself to her environment, can you wonder if your son also adapts himself to his? He will be very likely to think as you think, to say as you say, to do as you do. You are his model. May it always be to show him good, not evil, to lead him to the higher heights, away from the low and base, to the noble and beautiful, to the pure and good.



Perhaps you have already sent him out, and even now, like David, you are sitting at the gate waiting in anxiety for first news from your boy. If, however, he has had such careful training in the home, you need have no fear for him out yonder. Yet as you sit there at the gate you can hear the thunder of the fight sounding from afar as Gog and Magog, with all their evil forces, strive to overwhelm his soul, and as you hear you tremble for his safety, for you well know what power these evil forces wield. Can he endure it or will his courage fail? Oh, how your heart yearns to know of his welfare, but yet no news from the front. For days and days you have sat there with such a yearning and anxiety in your heart as you alone can know. Many times you have risen in your anxiety and strained your eyes across the plain for just a glimpse of the messenger returning from the field, but all is barrenness and desolation, and blinding tears shut out the bitter sight. But now you look again, and out yonder on the horizon you see dimly outlined the figure of a man running alone. News at last! News at last! In your excitement you rise and eagerly watch that fast-approaching figure. He draws nearer and nearer; is now within hailing distance, and from your lips goes forth that eager cry: "Is the young man Absalom safe?" but no answer is returned. What does it mean? Is he dead? Has he fallen? What news is it that he brings? Still onward comes that



silent figure. He clears the threshold with a bound, he flings himself into your arms and as you stagger backward you cry at sight of that face: "Why, it's Absalom! Absalom himself!"


Absalom? Why, of course it's Absalom! No Absalom will ever fail if his home training and parental example has been right. Why should he? The promises of God never fail if we fulfil our part. "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it." If you have trained Absalom right he will not be overcome in the fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil. He will come back to do honour to you, to your home, the Church and God.

Yes, it's Absalom, back from the fight, victorious over the enemy with many trophies won over sin and death and hell! It's Absalom, safe!—safe at last, and saved by God's almighty power according as you put your trust in Him!

## XI

### QUIT YOU LIKE MEN

*"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."*—I Corinthians 16:13.

HE success of the Christian Church depends upon the individual life and character of its members. The success of these individual lives and characters, in spiritual things, depends upon their appreciation of the difficulties to be overcome, and upon their adherence to Christian principles. It will not do for us to close our eyes to the dangers that confront us, nor to be afraid when we look upon them, but *seeing* the dangers and difficulties that lie before us, and knowing that we have eternal principles that can surely overcome them, we ought to go boldly forward in God's name and win the victory He has promised.

God never imposes a duty upon us without opening up a way for its fulfillment, He never utters a command without coupling with it a promise. Clouds may come, a horror of thick darkness envelop, so terrible in its aspect as to chill the iron in the blood and the courage in the heart, yet God's promises will all be fulfilled if

His commands are followed. For every darksome way in which He leads us, light will come at last, for every trial sent, grace will be extended, for every task assigned, eternal strength will evermore be given.

That there are difficulties before us everyone who has named the name of Christ fully realizes. None of us can hope to be "Carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease." The Christian life is a life of warfare. The Christian Church, indeed, is called "the Church Militant," and we can all appreciate the deep significance of that term. The word comes from "*Miles, Militis*," meaning a soldier, and so "the Church *Militant*" means a soldier Church; an aggressive Church, a conquering Church, and such it will continue to be until sin and death and hell have all been vanquished, when "the Church Militant" will be changed into "the Church Triumphant," and the Lord shall come to claim His own.

The strongest characters are oftentimes the most oppressed. Death is not the only thing that loves a shining mark. Evil also seeks it, and there hurls its strongest bombardments. Reading the memoirs of Augustine, we find what power sin had over him. De Quincy, in his confessions of an "English Opium Eater," shows us the terrible struggle that was constantly oppressing him. Coleridge, that master mind of English genius, fell before it. In the old Wartburg they still point out the place

where Luther hurled his ink-stand at the enemy of souls, while Paul, apostle, saint and martyr, cried out: "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death," and then, in warning to the rest of humankind, exclaimed: "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."

In this stirring appeal there are four principles to which we all need give earnest heed today, and apply them to our Christian lives. *Watchfulness*, steadfastness, courage and strength. At no time more than at the present has it been necessary for us to apply these principles to ourselves. The spirit of unrest is felt not only in the world, but in the Church itself, and it behooves us all to have some steadying principles if we would remain true to the fundamental principles of Christianity.

It is very easy, in these days of growing laxity and worldly-mindedness, to wander away from Christian principles and to be led back almost unconsciously into the world from whence we came. "Now the serpent was (and is) more subtle than any beast of the field," and personified in the great adversary of souls, he is going about silently, stealthily, devilishly trying to destroy us. He is digging pitfalls in our pathway and then covering them over with flowers that he may deceive us. His work accomplished, he slinks away and lurks in some hidden place nearby that he may witness

our destruction. Along the highway of life where the pitfall has been digged comes the unconscious Christian. He is revelling in the sunshine of life; the world has on for him her gayest dress and brightest jewels, and he is dazzled, even blinded by her glory. Nearer and nearer he comes to the flower-covered pitfall, all unmindful of his danger, and the devil, lurking near, chuckles in fiendish glee as he watches his fatal course. Still nearer draws the Christian, and now he sees the flowers lying in his pathway, but ah! not the pitfall that lies beneath. He hastens forward in great joy as he sees the flowers, steps upon their frail support,—there is a crash beneath his feet, his arms fly up to heaven in helplessness and agony, and he goes down—down to everlasting death!

Why was it? Because he had not been exercising the first great essential of all consistent Christian life—that of watchfulness. If we would ever win in this great fight of faith, if we would ever walk consistently and safely as Christians, we must look beneath the surface of things, deeper than the flowers which cover them, and oftentimes we will find pitfalls, danger and death where we least expected them. It is not sufficient that we have our names upon the Church roll and believe in that good old Presbyterian doctrine of the “Perseverance of the saints”—we must first prove ourselves to be saints, before

we can take much comfort from that doctrine. We must watch, be ever on the alert, or these things of the world which we should conquer will conquer us.

Let us be sure of this, that whether we watch or no, the eyes of the world, and the eyes of God are watching us, and of the two, the world is always the harsher judge. Yes, she will gayly invite us to join in all her debauchery and wantonness, but when we do partake with her in these excesses, it is the old sin-soaked world that is the first to criticize. She will pass the wine-cup of all her doubtful pleasures and all her compromising sins among us, and, as we drink, will praise us for our broad-mindedness and lack of fanatical scruples, but when our back is turned, the finger of scorn is raised and the jeering, sneering remark goes forth: "And that's a Christian!" Is this not the world's treatment of weak-kneed Christians? Is not this the world's judgment? I sometimes think, when I look at the question in this light, that the world has a higher ideal of Christianity than the Church itself. Two things, at least, are certain: First, that it will honour us all the more if we live true to the vows we have taken upon ourselves, and second, that it will take all our Christian strength and watchfulness to live up to the ideal which even the old sin-sodden world has set.

Will you remember these things and act upon



them? Will you seek honour of the world as well as of God by trying to live more as the *world* expects you to live, if you are a Christian? Will you keep a guard upon your actions and a watch upon your words when the wicked come nigh you? David said: "I will take heed to my ways that I sin not with my tongue. I will keep my mouth with a bridle while the wicked is before me." If you will do the same you will reach the world's ideal and God's ideal and conquer in the name of the Lord.

Need I emphasize that other fact, that the eye of God is ever watching us? One of the most impressive verses in all the Bible, to me, is that which says: "Thou, God, seest me." Yes, in all my striving after righteousness, in all of my anguish because of failure, in all of my temptation, sin and folly, "Thou, God, seest me." He is watching us, not in criticism and severity, but in tenderness and love, to see whether we watch or no. Gethsemane is being repeated in many lives and hearts, Christ has gone into the garden again, but this time it is the garden of Paradise. He has left us at the gates as He left His disciples of old—left us with the same command, "Tarry ye here and *watch* while I go and pray yonder." Yonder He is praying, not for Himself this time, but mediating with the Father for you, and even now I fancy He is coming again to His disciples, His heart yearning for the love and sympathy of

His people as it did then, and He finds now, as then, His disciples asleep at the gates! and from the Father's throne above, whence He, today, looks down upon you, a sleeping Church, I fancy I hear that same voice crying those sorrow-laden words: "Could ye not watch with me one hour?"—"Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation!"

*"Up, Christians, up and be doing.  
This is no time for repose;  
If you take not the part of your Master  
You are taking the part of His foes.*

*Lift up the lamp of the gospel,  
Let not its light grow dim;  
He gave His life for your ransom,  
Will you give up nothing for Him?"*

There is another principle, however, which is urged upon us here as an essential for true Christian living, and that is: Steadfastness in the Faith. "Stand fast in the faith." This is another exhortation which is peculiarly appropriate at the present time. We are living in an age of doubt; of philosophic inquiry and infidel speculation. Beliefs in which our ancestors lived and died are now rejected as absurd, unless they can conform to the laws of mathematics and the laboratory. Christian doctrines are now required by some, to conform not so much with God's Holy Word as with what they are pleased to term "advanced thought." Nor is this spirit of inquiry, of speculation and doubt

confined to unbelievers alone; but within the very precinct of the Church, speculations, doubts and heresies have arisen which threaten to undermine the very foundations of our faith. God's righteous decrees are called in question by some, the vicarious sufferings of Christ by others, while still others are weakening the faith of thousands in the Word of God itself, by studying it after a method that is all head and no heart, that is all mental and none spiritual, that is striving after the letter but not the spirit of the law.

Are we going to allow these things to affect our trust in God? Ah, I pray you, heed the exhortation of the text, "Stand fast in the faith." If faith is gone, then all is gone, for faith is the keystone of the arch that bridges the eternities. It binds the promises of God, made in eternity past, to their glorious fulfilment in the eternity which is to come. Destroy the keystone, and the arch falls in utter ruin; destroy faith, and the whole Christian system is void and meaningless. "Stand fast in the faith." God grant that we may never be so weak as to be affected by these blighting heresies which from time to time arise. Shall I yield my belief in the eternal attributes of God because some deny His omnipotence? Shall I forsake my hope in the redemption purchased by Christ because others say that His death was not vicarious? Shall I believe that those grand old Bible stories which my mother told at her knee

are but the fiction of an idle brain, and not the inspired Word of God, because, forsooth, they do not conform to all the canons which certain critics or schismatics may set up? Forbid it, Almighty God! "On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand."

Are you in the midst of these storms of doubt and scepticism? Remember that faith is as "an anchor to the soul both sure and steadfast." Let go the anchor, therefore, and, sinking deep beneath the billows, it will bury itself in the cleft of the rock Christ Jesus, and hold you firm and fast until these wrecking winds of doubt and heresy have blown away.

The last two principles of the text I would group together and apply them in a closing thought. "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." Manliness, or courage and strength, are both necessary for the most effective service. Strength without courage is like an engine without steam—a massive organism capable of great possibilities, but lacking the motive power. Courage without strength is like a Samson shorn of his locks, anxious to do great things, but as helpless as a child. For the most effective service, then, they must be united, and thus joined, no one can limit their possibilities.

It is this that the Church needs today, and will need in the future—courage, manliness, strength, virility. The ascending steps in the development

of true manhood, indeed, can well be shown by tracing that word "virility" through its originals. "Vir" means a man, "Virtus" manly strength, courage. "Virtue," the bloom and essence of all goodness. "Vir," "Virtus," "Virtue," manliness, courage, strength and goodness. These are the steps that lead men up to true nobility of character. Weapons and force may intimidate men, but they cannot change their nature. You may kill the body, but you cannot kill the principle with the same weapon. The only way to drive out unrighteousness is to infuse righteousness; the only way to make a *man* is to fill this bony and muscular structure, commonly *called* a man, with a moral purpose and a spiritual aspiration. Such are the men who move the world. Solon was worth more than armies to the admiring Greeks, Athanasius stood, though alone, as a rock amid a most perverse age. Gustavus Adolphus was representative not only of Sweden, but of the world. Each Bismark and Gladstone and Washington and Lincoln stand for more than parties, platforms or partisan principles; they stand for unfettered manhood that always moulds the world for good.

Trials and difficulties may be before us, but remember, as one of the nation's great ones has told us: "Duty decides destiny, and destiny which results from duty performed, though it may bring anxiety and perils, will never bring dishonour or defeat."


God today is laying a duty upon strong, courageous manhood and womanhood, to guard the fundamentals of religion and morality in the Church and state and nation—to watch, stand fast in faithfulness, acquit themselves like men and be strong for service. Perils and trials and difficulties may be before us, but failure never. Forward, then, men of action, men of purpose, men of strength! Forward in the name of God, of His Church and of humanity. There are many wrongs to be righted, many rights to be preserved, many hearts to cheer and souls to save. Forward until the warning “Watch ye” be changed to the welcome, “Come ye;” the message, “Stand fast in the faith,” to the commendatory, “Thou *hast* been faithful;” the urgent, “quit you like men, be strong,” to the satisfied, “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”



## XII

### WOMAN'S SPHERE

*"She hath done what she could."*—Mark 14:8.

UTY is a hard taskmaster, and is generally so exacting in his demands that few there be who can fulfil them all. Man has endeavoured to cover many fields of effort, striving sincerely, doubtless, to do his duty in each of them, but failing because of the multiplicity of their demands. Woman, with truer instinct, has confined herself to a smaller sphere and has fulfilled her duty better according to her strength and opportunity.

Many speak deprecatingly of the narrowness of woman's sphere, but when we remember that for mothers, at least, it includes that source of all the world's hope and trust, the home,—her sphere is enlarged immeasurably. Her influence is her greatest source of power, and as the circle of our influence is always greater in diameter than the circle of our work, her service is again enlarged to boundless opportunities. Measure that influence, if you will, but remember the formula:

(Influence is equal to the square of our character multiplied by the sum of all our efforts. Find, now,)

the multiple of character and apply it unto woman. Character has been described as "the joint product of nature and nurture," and in both of these, woman has been peculiarly blessed. Nature has given her a large heart, warm sympathies, loving impulses, and nurture has developed these and increased them a thousand fold.

Now, figure out the problem if you would find the extent of woman's sphere! Multiply the joint effects of nature and of nurture and you have character. Square character, multiply it by all individual effort, and you have influence. Multiply influence by all the wide-reaching effects of home life and training, and you have the circumference of that circle that bounds woman's life and action.

There are some who say that the Bible does not give woman her true place or recognize her love and her devotion. We cannot read the Word of God, however, and note the striking examples of noble womanhood that are given there and the warm ecomiums that are offered to her love and devotion and influence without knowing that with such service as woman gives, God is well pleased.

Read the testimonies that are given concerning Miriam and Deborah; Ruth and Naomi; Hannah and Esther; Dorcas and Phoebe; Martha and Mary, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and know of the high esteem in which our divine Lord and Father holds the faithful of womankind. They were women, we are told, who ministered unto the

Lord of their substance, who cared for Him in His hours of need, while others were heaping calumnies upon His head. They were women who were last at the cross and first at the sepulchre, who could not be driven from the one place by Roman spears, or kept from the other by heavy stone or emperor's seal.

It was a woman unto whom He first revealed the true significance of His mission in the world. It was a woman who, when the mob was closing in around Him, when Calvary and its sufferings were but a few days off, came in as He sat at meat and brake the alabaster box of ointment to anoint Him, as He said, for His burying, and it was a woman, *this* woman, who stands as the representative of all the faithful of her sex throughout all ages, of whom Christ said in commendation of her love and zeal: "She hath done what she could."

I come tonight, however, not only to eulogize the past, but to visualize the future; to speak not only of what woman has done, but what she may yet do through the influence of her womanhood and motherhood. Honoured and admired as woman is for her grace, her beauty, and her purity, let us always remember that the crown of woman is maternity. What is it that melts our hearts the most to tenderness and tears? The crooning of the lullabies that mothers' lips sing soft and low to a baby's drowsy ears. What is it that artists most have tried to represent and

thereby immortalize their genius? The vision of a woman with a baby in her arms. Ah, blessed sight!—the vision of the Madonna and her Child! Raphael dipped his brush in living colours and made his name immortal by that scene. Botticelli, Murillo, Titian, Correggio, Da Vinci, Andrea Del Sarto, Bartolommes, Holbein, Fra-Angelico,—scarce a great painter but sought at some time in his history to paint his conception of the Madonna and her blessed Child. Aye, here is a theme that well may tax the genius of the world's greatest artists, for maternity is the apotheosis of womanhood.

Privilege hath its penalty, however; opportunity its responsibility, and motherhood, though thus blessed, is not free from a corresponding anxiety and care.

Great are the responsibilities that rest upon the parents in the home, but far the larger part rests upon the mother in the training of the young. Home is her sphere, the children are like wax or ductile gold before her, and her influence is the die that stamps the coin of their character and thereby shows its "face value" to society.

"One good mother," George Herbert once said, "is worth a hundred schoolmasters." Small wonder that such is so when we remember the home is the first school and the mother the first teacher. It is here life's primer must be taught, it is here that the alphabet of life's duties must be learned,

and the mother is the one who must inculcate those lessons which shall last through eternity.

In this school of the home there are two different temperaments to be trained, two different organisms to be developed, one for service, the other for society. Your son is to go out to take his place in the world of work; your daughter into the world of social helpfulness and sympathy. One is to be to a certain degree ascetic; the other to a certain degree esthetic, yet in neither one should these be always dominant. "She hath done what she could." Are you doing what you can?

Every young man starting out in life should early learn the lesson of self-denial and self-sacrifice. He must be in a large sense an ascetic if he ever hopes to make anything of himself. Pampered pets never gained hardihood of body or soul enough to do any great thing. It is the self-denying, self-sacrificing souls that have gained strength by sacrifice, experience by trial, and greater resolution by affliction that have moved the world.

This is a lesson which is hard for mothers to teach their sons. Their love will not only protest, but be apt to pamper him. Shielded thus from trials he ought to face and conquer, both in physical, mental and spiritual things, his body will grow flabby, his mind vacuous, his soul pulpy, and instead of having wings to soar he will have only leaden feet that cannot even climb. Don't protect

the boy too much. He cannot be with you always. He must go out some time and meet the world's difficulties and trials. Teach him to meet them *now*, to deny himself and bear heroically some of the hard things of life rather than to be always cushioned on the soft and pleasurable. Spoiled children and spoiled fruit are both alike,—they are both *soft*, and good for nothing; the final stage of the fruit will be the corresponding stage of the child. Don't soften your son by luxury and indulgence, but rather harden, strengthen him by imposing duty and exacting sacrifice in the little things of life, that he may be prepared for the greater affairs of life which are too soon to come.

Specific duties may doubtless have to be enforced; duties as to Christianity and citizenship, the Bible and the ballot-box, purity and politics, and in this the mother has great influence and a large responsibility. Much has been said of the power of the politician, but the power of a practical piety in the mother is far greater. "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world," says the old adage, and certainly the hand that moulds the character that shall mould the politics of the next generation is more powerful than the hand of a mere demagogue who shall seek to influence that character afterwards.

Women have at last succeeded in getting the privileges of the polls. I tell you, mothers, you don't need them when you have the privilege of



sending your representative there! He will vote for you. He, indeed, will vote for two there, one for himself and one for you. He will go there like the veriest slave of the political boss or vote-buyer; heart-bound, soul-bound, conscience-bound;—bought by love, bribed by duty and forever bound by the bands of childhood's training! Give him, then, a high ideal of citizenship and civic duty. Teach him that he must help bring politics up to purity, the ballot up to the Bible, citizenship up to Christianity, and this nation will rise up and call both you and him blessed. "She hath done what she could." Are you doing what you can?

To the daughter there is no less a distinctive duty which the mother must fulfill. She is going out into society not merely to be an ornament, surely, but rather a bulwark and a pillar. Esthetic though her life may be rather than ascetic, let it be esthetic in the highest sense in that it shall include the good, the beautiful and true. There are many false ideals of society that need to be corrected; many false estimates of life that need to be set right. Girls are very apt to have these false estimates as ideals before them. They are attracted by the glamour of the world, by the outside more than the inside, by words without waiting for deeds, by airy promises without earnest execution. You mothers have been through the mazes of the world's society in many of its different strata. You know its hollowness and shallow-

ness. You are nearest your daughter's heart, or ought to be. Let your heart open itself to hers and set things in their true relation. Teach her that the seeming of a thing is not that which is first to be considered, but rather its true being; that right is right and to be honoured and revered, even though it be clad in homespun; that wrong is wrong and is to be frowned on and condemned, though it be clad in fine raiment and fare sumptuously every day.

Society of the worldly kind is very much like a drum with the air all out,—it is not only hollow, it's a vacuum. Where there is not hollow pretense there is apparently vacuous ignorance of the deeper things of life and the higher aims of moral and spiritual well-being. We need either a reformation or a revolution in Society, and may the daughters of this generation be the ones, guided by sensible mothers, who shall bring it to pass, so that the name Society shall not conjure up as it does now, an endless weary round of balls and fetes and routs of every kind, but rather the idea of helpfulness, sympathy and love shown forth in practical as well as pleasurable ways to one another.

One other thing I would emphasize above all, and that is, do not forget your responsibility or your power in spiritual things. John Randolph, our great American statesman, once said: "I should have been an atheist if it had not been for

one recollection, and that was the memory of the time when my departed mother used to take my little hand in hers and caused me, on my knees, to say: 'Our Father who art in heaven'! " Ah, mothers, there would be thousands upon thousands of atheists in the world today but for those tender memories that cluster around a mother's knees, and for the sacred lessons that there were learned! Yours is a power far greater than that of teachers or preachers, for, remember, you have the first chance. We will take young hearts and minds and try to train them afterwards, but they have already been started, and you were the ones who had the blessed privilege of planting the seed of righteousness. May your training ever tend thus. Foolish and misguided love may spoil and mar, but wise affection guided by Christian grace and character, will ever tell for the soul's eternal well-being, and thus woman's power will perpetuate itself, and her duty will be fulfilled more nearly to perfection, until at the last, may God say of you in commendation of all your work and tears and prayers for the well-being of your loved ones: "She hath done what she could."

## XIII

### THE PILLARS OF THE EARTH

*"The pillars of the earth are the Lord's and he hath set the world upon them."*—I Samuel 2:8.



HE pillars of the earth! " What are they? You cannot plot and diagram an Angelus with a theodolite, or by square and compass and surveyor's line. You cannot analyse an Iliad with a test-tube, or by the rules of mathematics and the laboratory. So, with the Magnificat of Mary and this hymn of Hannah's for the coming of a Samuel, you cannot analyse the similes, the metaphors and hyperboles by any inductive or deductive method, but must accept them as they are: the outcry of a perfervid soul that fires our fancy, enkindles our imagination, widens our horizon and enlarges life.

"The pillars of the earth! " What are they? Hannah herself could not have told. It is a simile of trust, a fancy of faith, an imagination of the soul that shows assurance in the ultimate power of God and all those righteous principles that sustain the world and the people of His choice.

"The pillars of the earth! " What are they? Name one " religion " and the other " education,"

and you have two ultimate facts, two primal principles that well will fit the fancy of the figure and prove themselves sufficient to bear the world's weight on the strong support of their eternal power.

What is religion? Some have called it a star, a sun, a dawn, a glorious effulgence. Yes, it is that, and more. It rose as the first faint shining of a star over Bethlehem's manger cradle, as it guided the worshipping magi to the birthplace of the world's Redeemer. It grew in strength and power until it burst forth as the sun of righteousness, and shot upward to the zenith. It kissed the vine-clad hills of Judea, Samaria and Galilee; woke to life the sleeping silence of Asia, as she lay dreaming of her false gods upon the bosom of the Mediterranean; shone with sufficient intensity upon the cold religious formalism of Northern Europe to start the bonfire of the Reformation; lighted the path of the Pilgrims to this New World of ours, and filled it with divine effulgence; poured forth a glorious radiance on the islands of the sea that made sin ashamed and evil hide its diminished head, and now is flooding all the world with such a golden glory as never before was seen on sea or land, and thus has banished the world's dark night and made it daybreak everywhere.

What is religion? Glorious as this is, it is something more than this. It is a pillar, a prop, a sure foundation upon which kingdoms, empires, peo-

ples, and republics may safely build and rear vast temples of achievement for the welfare of man and the glory of their Lord.

"Is Saul also among the prophets?" Three, at least, of those great sons, whose birth we celebrate in that short month, from which Augustus, in ruthless avarice, stole another day—may be placed with the prophets in what they say concerning this principle of religion.

Hear Washington, the praying man of Valley Forge, the conquering man of Yorktown, as he cries, in his farewell address:

"Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism who should labour to subvert these great pillars of human happiness—these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens."

Hear Edison, that February wizard of science and invention, who still moves among us, as he says:

"The more I delve into the mysteries of nature, the more convinced I am that behind all the mysteries there is a Supreme Intelligence. I do not say a force, a power, a law, for that would not necessarily correlate a personality; but I say, emphatically, a Supreme Intelligence working through unchanging and all-powerful law."

Hear, also, that grim, gaunt figure that strode



the world like a Colossus, that bore a nation on his shoulders yet kept his heart as soft as thistle-down, and from the lips of Abraham Lincoln, son of Anak, you hear this cry, in the darkest hour of national woe:

“ God bless the churches, and blessed be God who, in this our great trial, giveth us the churches! ”

Is Saul also among the prophets? Call the roll of those whom these brief February days have given to the world and you would find much the same testimony: Lowell and Longfellow among the poets, Victor Hugo and Grimm among the novelists, Copernicus and Galileo among the scientists, Talleyrand and Tilden among the statesmen, Horace Greely and Henry Watterson among the editors, General Sherman and General Hancock among the soldiers, Cotton Mather and Washington Gladden among the preachers, Mark Hopkins and Mary Lyons among the educators, all with varying faiths, with divergent personalities, but all ready to testify that religion plus education are indeed “ the pillars of the earth.”

What is education? If religion is the bud, education is the blossom. If religion is the flower, education is the fruit. There is, indeed, such vital correlation that they can not be dissociated. Trace back education to its farthest limit and you will find that it has always had religion for its nursing

mother and "the sincere milk of the Word" as its early meat and drink.

What is education? Is it the acquirement of facts? No! That is knowledge. Is it the training of the intellect? No! That is learning. Is it the development of character and ability? Yes! That is culture.

Culture is not of the head alone, but of the head and heart. Knowledge and learning rise no higher than the grey matter in the brain; culture rises into the infinite heaven and buries itself deep in the bosom of God. It was of this highest culture that Solomon spoke, when he said, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."

Knowledge, without learning, develops a James I., whom the Duc de Sully called "The wisest fool in Europe!" Learning, without culture, develops Sir Walter Scott's "Doctor Dry-as-Dust." Culture, with learning and knowledge, develops "the all-round-man" and makes him, as well as itself, another "pillar of the earth."

Head knowledge, without heart understanding, is like an engine without steam—a mighty organism, with wonderful possibilities, but lacking the motive power. Mere machinery will never generate anything. There is no power in cold iron, but there is much in hot steam! Cold is merely a preservative; heat is a generator. Motion, indeed, of every kind, is only another form of heat, ac-

cording to scientific formulæ; and before the brain, with all of its activities, before the body, with all its varied functions, before the soul, indeed, with all its higher aspirations, can be set in motion, the furnace fires of the heart must be enkindled to furnish the motive power. Feelings, then, are the forces that move life's enginery. The heart is the generator; the brain merely the balance wheel of the machine.

Is education thus correlated with religion? Is it, indeed, the twin "pillar of the earth"? Are there other souls among the prophets ready to testify to this also?

Let England's educator, Herbert Spencer, speak, and hear him testify that education is at least moral, from the very title he gives his work on the subject, which he calls *Education, Intellectual, Moral and Physical*.

Let Emerson, Concord's sage, bear witness, as he says:

"The great object of education should be commensurate with the object of life. It should be a moral one—to inspire the youthful man with an interest in himself, . . . to inflame him with a piety toward the Grand Mind in which he lives."

Let Plato talk to you, in his *Republic*, and you will hear him saying:

"The aim of early education is not truth as a matter of fact, but as a matter of principle, . . . not as the

filling of a vessel, but as the turning of the soul to the light. . . . The child is to be taught first simple religious truths . . . and insensibly to learn the lesson of good manners and good taste," which is truest culture.

Religion and education! Twin pillars of the earth! How long have they stood together! What have they wrought! It was the temples that furnished the first teachers—the wise men, the soothsayers and astrologers, who became the astronomers, the philosophers, and the scientists of later time. It was the monks of mediæval time who became the schoolmen. It was the Venerable Bede, a monk of the early Church, who gave education to England. It was Columba, the missionary, who gave it to Scotland. It was Saint Patrick, the priest, who gave it to Ireland. It was the Church that gave Oxford and Cambridge, Eton and Harrow to England; that gave Harvard and Yale, Princeton and Rutgers, to America, and that is giving a thousand other Christian schools, academies, and colleges to the youth of the land today. It is the Church that is sending preachers and teachers together to banish the darkness in heathen lands, to curb their passions, heal their woes and bring order from disorder, cosmos out of chaos, and civilization out of barbarism, the butcher, and the brute.

Religion and education! Twin pillars of the earth! What have they wrought together? What

yet can they work? The same power that has transformed the savage to the saint, the brute to the brother, in the islands of the sea can do it here, if applied with the same zeal and faith and prayer. The world is not to be saved by any new-fangled fads and fancies, but only by the old-fashioned facts of faith as exemplified in religion and Christian-education.

Are there fears for the future? Aye, and for the present, too! Civilization has retrograded. There has been a reversion to type on the part of large classes of society. The mental and spiritual in man have been displaced by the animal and brutal.

"In Russia conscience is dead," says Maxim Gorky. Why? Because Russia lost her religion.

"Germany has lost her soul," says Dr. Muhlon. Why? Because Germany, with all her getting, forgot that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."

"The first thing we must do is to get rid of religion, if we are to prepare the world for communism," says Carl Marx. Why? Because religion and communism cannot grow together. The one is wheat, the other weeds. Weeds are indigenous to the soil, wheat isn't. If you don't sow wheat you'll reap weeds. If you sow wheat from the seed of the Word, weeds can never flourish, especially if you till the soil with the plowshare of truth and education.

“ We’ll have none of religious education! ” cries the bolshevik and anarchist. “ We’ll start non-religious schools! We’ll teach irreligion, agnosticism, atheism! ” Why? Because they know that, “ as the twig is bent, the tree’s inclined.” Because they know that, if they get the child, they’ll get the man and his child, and their children’s children after them.

“ We’ll have 300 such schools in New York and 3,000 in the country in a very short time,” they say. Why? Because they know, if they can do this, they can, by such persistence, uproot religion and education and overthrow the nation by destroying the very pillars on which it stands.

Already they have started this insidious, blasphemous and sacrilegious work. In New York many such schools were started months ago, one not many blocks from this very church where I am now preaching.

What should be our answer to this challenge? There can be no question as to that! Our answer must be more religion, more education. If they plant 300 schools here, we must plant 500! If they plant 3,000 in the nation, we must plant 5,000 more!

The pillars of the earth are being threatened! From out the darkest shadows that ever enwrapt our land a sinister Sampson is creeping stealthily toward their fair proportions. He hates the pillars, he hates all beauty, truth, and reason, he



hates the world! In one hand he holds the torch of incendiarism, in the other the bomb of revolution, while deep in his soul hate, avarice, greed, gluttony, massacre and murder are writhing, twisting, hissing, spitting in venomous fury like some loathsome serpent, enfolding Laocoön. Under his tongue is the poison of asps, in his heart are the fires of hell. Let once that monster seize those pillars in his loathsome grasp and bow himself between them, then civilization sways, religion topples, education falls and then—the deluge!

The pillars of the earth are threatened! What shall we do? First, stop the madman, scotch the snake, draw the fangs! We cannot reason with a maniac! While the house is burning we cannot read a tract to the man that fires our house! Put out the fire! Subdue the maniac! Make the city safe for the citizen and the nation, safe for our neighbours!

The pillars of the earth are threatened! What shall we do? “Ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.” The old religion that has conquered barbarism, violence, blood, and death in the past is still able to conquer and win a glorious victory. Bolshevism has slain its thousands, but religion has saved its ten thousands! Anarchism has broken hearts, shattered reason and driven millions to despair, but education, with religion, has restored reason on her throne, made the lame to

walk, the blind to see, the heart to hope and the world to rise again.

Saul is still among the prophets! Hope is still the heritage of the just! Hear Roger W. Babson, the businessman's "Babson," who furnishes the weekly reports of business conditions to thousands of firms throughout the country, as he says in one weekly business letter:

"The need of the hour is not more legislation. The need of the hour is more religion. More religion is needed everywhere, from the halls of Congress at Washington to the factories, mines, fields and forests. It is one thing to talk about plans and policies, but a plan and policy without a religious motive is like a watch without a spring or a body without the breath of life. . . . Politics and industries need to get Jesus' point of view, which is both economically and psychologically sound. Once more, I say, the need of the hour is religion! "

Do you say, "Religion has nothing to do with the state, that this is not a Christian nation"? I say that religion has as much to do with the state as it has with education, that all government, whether pagan or Christian, was first an hierarchy, that the chieftains of barbarous tribes, the princes, potentates, and emperors of early as well as later times, were either appointed or inducted into office by the voodoo, doctor, priest, or bishop of their prevailing faiths, that no king or emperor, prince-ling or president, can be enthroned in power today

without the rites, the oaths, and offices of the religion of the land.


You say the word "Christian" or "Christianity" is not in the Constitution. I say, the Constitution did not make Christianity, but Christianity made the Constitution. From the time when Columbus first bowed the knee to God as he landed here and dedicated this land to the Lord, from the time when the Pilgrim Fathers reaffirmed that action in the cabin of the *Mayflower* in the Solemn League and Compact, this country has been, and please God, ever will be, a Christian nation. It is expressed in the literature of the land, impressed upon our coinage in the solemn words, "In God We Trust," and confessed in the hearts and lives of all our true citizens.

The pillars of the earth are threatened! What shall we do? Make this religion of ours vital! Make "Christianity" a battlecry, not a social shibboleth! Make education and religion a correlated power that shall drive out ignorance by reason, lawlessness by a fuller appreciation of the law, sedition by a greater knowledge of the many blessings of our land, and so purge and purify our nation that anarchists and bolsheviki will be no happier here than devils would in heaven; until, at last, we will indeed have one flag, one law, one language, "one God and Father of us all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all."

## XIV

### A CHANCE FOR EVERY ONE

*"Who shall order the battle? And he answered, Thou!"*  
—I Kings 20:14.

OD never creates a crisis without making a measure or a man to meet it. God is no respecter of persons; He sometimes chooses the weak things of the world to confound the mighty, and sometimes the mighty to confound the weak. It is foolish for a man to think that another is no good simply because he wears a white collar and a clean shirt. It is equally as foolish for the other side to say that a man is not worth consideration because he wears a corduroy coat and hob-nailed shoes.

When work is to be done God looks not at the outward appearance, but on the heart. Many a silk-stockinged, kid-gloved individual has a virile purpose in his life and many a rough-coated, hard-fisted "rough neck" has the gentleness of culture and the courtesy of kindness in his make-up. So, when the crisis comes, God calls upon the high and low, the rich and poor, the learned and the unlearned, and gives to every man his chance to

prove his manhood and to win the battle set before him.

One other thing that God makes clear in His call is that the failures, the derelicts, the immoral and the lawless shall each have his chance if he will seize it, for long after the world gives a man up God holds on to him and tries to win him back to an appreciation of himself and the powers within him.

Ahab was one of the most wicked kings that ever reigned in Israel, but it was to him that the call came to make a fresh start and do something worth while. Israel was threatened by the Syrians. Samaria was surrounded on every side by them and their allies. There seemed to be no escape, but God said there was; that a battle must be waged and that victory would be assured. It seemed impossible to Ahab. It was so hard a task that he felt some superman would be necessary and he knew he was no superman! "Who shall order the battle?" he cried in bewilderment, and was still more bewildered when the Lord answered: "Thou!" He couldn't understand it all. He a renegade, a flouter of God, an immoral and rebellious man to be chosen for such a task by the God whom he had denied? It seemed impossible, but he took God at His word and went forward into that battle and won such a sweeping victory over those tremendous odds as to prove that God was in it all and was still on his side.

This is a sermon to the fearful and afraid, to the man and the woman who thinks they have no chance left in life and that it is no use trying further. It is a sermon also for those who think the work of the world is to be done by others; that they have only to sit on the "side lines" and watch the game of life while others play it;—for those who think that they are not great enough to count, that their contribution to life doesn't matter. It is a call to every individual to realize that he or she has a work in life that others cannot do, and no matter how high or low, how rich or poor, there is a call coming to every soul to play the game of life fairly, to do their part, to be workers and not shirkers in the workshop of the world.

The first thing I want to emphasize in the analysis of the thought I have in mind is: Opportunity comes to the man and not to the mass: to the individual and not to the institution. That is the way God's call came in the Scriptures, and that is the way God's call is coming today to those who will listen to it.

When the Hebrews were dying under the lash of their Egyptian oppressors the call did not come to all Israel, but to Moses, the individual. When, in later times, Israel was again oppressed by the Midianites, the call did not come to those 32,000 who were ready to follow, but to Gideon, who was ready to lead! So it was with Elijah, Elisha, David and the rest of those mighty men,—mighty,



remember, only through God, for Moses was tending sheep, Gideon was threshing wheat, Elijah was an unknown wanderer, and David was the youngest in his father's house, a sheep herder, when he was called to deliver Israel.

A man may be insignificant to his fellows, but he is never insignificant to God, if he has a desire to do big things in his soul. Nor, on the other hand, can a man be too high, too noble in this world's estimation to escape his share of hard work for the good of humanity. At this particular season of the year, and in this historic month, the thought is the more impressed upon us as Americans. Two great names shine out in this wintry February sunshine, both of whom did such great things for his country as to put it under eternal obligation. One was rich, the other poor. One had great advantages through wealth and social position, the other none. One was George Washington, the aristocrat, the other, Abraham Lincoln, the democrat and backwoodsman!

These men heard the individual call. The great mass of men heard it not, but *they* heard it and responded nobly. Surely, with the illustration of these two lives before us, we ought to all realize that the call of opportunity and the call of God comes to each individual, and no matter what our station in life we ought to be ready to heed it and do something to show why God sent us here!

I sometimes think there ought to be "Mis-

sions " for the rich just as much as for the poor. Nay, more! for they need it more! The work of the world today is done more by the poor than the rich. The opportunities of the world are being used more by the poor than the rich. Riches and social position are a hindrance and a handicap in life! Poverty and obscurity are the spurs that drive men onward to success. A mission on Fifth Avenue to teach the idle rich what to do with their time and talents, instead of squandering them on tango teas and monkey banquets! What an opportunity for a Billy Sunday! A mission on First or Ninth Avenue to teach the discouraged and despondent how to rise above their surroundings and make something of themselves that will bless them and all their fellow-men! What an opportunity for a Moody or a Beecher!

Many are the illustrations that each might use in his mission talks. William III. and Victoria—God-fearing monarchs; the Earl of Shaftesbury, the Baroness Burdet-Coutts and Sir Philip Sidney—self-sacrificing nobles, and George Washington, Frances E. Willard, and Theodore Roosevelt, American aristocrats, on the one hand! Then Cromwell, the farmer; Luther, the miner's son; Jerry McAuley, the outcast; William and Catherine Booth, the Angels of the Poor; General Grant, the tanner's apprentice; Garfield, the canal boat boy, and Abraham Lincoln, son of the log cabin, on the other!

Oh, men and women, whatever your station, don't say you have no chance! The chances are all about you if you'll only take them, and then you will make the world thank God that you have lived!

"Who shall order the battle?—Thou!" Why not? You have as many opportunities as had these. Andrew Carnegie said, before he died, that he would gladly give all his fortune for another twenty years of life, for there were so many more opportunities now than there were when he was a young man that he knew he could make infinitely more and do infinitely more good in the next twenty years than he had done in the past.

Why not try to do something yourself instead of leaving it all to others? The call is to the individual now as it was in the days of old, "Thou art the man!" says God now. "Thou art the woman." The Miriams and Deborahs; the Hannahs and the Marys with the Marthas of every age are being called as definitely in these present times as ever they were. The call is not for tomorrow or next week or next year, but *now*! God gives us our existence only breath by breath lest we may grow presumptuous. He gives us our opportunities in the same way. The same opportunity never comes twice, or at least it never comes in the same way. "Now is the accepted time. Now is the day of salvation." That is God's warning concerning salvation. The same

warning has been voiced in a thousand ways concerning opportunity.

Hear Ingalls in that wonderful sonnet of his as he makes Opportunity cry:

*" Master of human destiny am I!  
Fame, Love and Fortune on my footsteps wait.  
Cities and fields I walk, I penetrate  
Deserts and seas remote, and passing by  
Hovel and mart and palace, soon or late,  
I knock unbidden, once, on every gate.  
If sleeping, waken! If feasting, rise before  
I pass away! It is the hour of fate,  
And they who follow me reach every state  
Mortals desire, and conquer every foe—  
Save death. But they who doubt or hesitate,  
Condemned to failure, penury and woe,  
Seek me in vain and uselessly implore;  
I answer not and I return—no more!"*

Therefore:

*" Improve Time in time, while the time shall last.  
For all Time is no time, when the time is past."*

My second observation in this analysis is: God is always ready to raise up followers if He can get leaders.

Moses got 600,000 fighting men to stand with him when he went up out of Egypt. Gideon had 32,000 soldiers ready for his command when he was ready to go against the Midianites. Abraham Lincoln had the sound of that mighty chorus:

*"We are coming Father Abraham, 300,000 strong,"*

ringing in his ears when he cast the die for God and his fellow-men. If you are only ready to hear the call, God will give you many followers. Thousands are waiting to be led into the right, the just, the true if you will only take the initiative. The young men of "the princes of the provinces" were ready to go forward with Ahab that day when God called, and there are plenty of young men and women who are ready to follow you if you will only lead them. "Who shall order the battle? Thou!" Who shall fight with me? A noble army of young men and young women, of mature men and women who are eager to do something for God and their native land if someone will only lead them. Why not you?

Are you still fearful? Remember that beside all you can inspire with your leadership there will always be another with you. That other is God. One with God is a majority! He that is with us is more than all they that be against us! No one need ever be afraid of getting help in a good cause. He has it promised at the outset by Omnipotence Himself. "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee!" That is God's answer to the fearful and afraid. Take God at His word and go forward and you will find how many scores and hundreds and thousands there are ready to follow you in the God-marked way.

And in conclusion I am led to say: If we are ready to answer the individual call and trust God for followers we can also trust God for the victory, for He has promised it and He never goes back on His word.

What a promise that was to Ahab that day! A sweeping victory assured to a beleaguered city, surrounded by the army of the Syrians and thirty-two kings and their armies! Yet Ahab took God at His word and went out against that great, overwhelming odds and won the day!

Oh, yes! I know you think your trials and troubles are more than anyone else ever had, but that isn't so! Ask your neighbour, and he or she can beat you at your own game! It seems as though we all rejoice to prove that our troubles are greater than anyone's else! Don't count your troubles! Count your blessings! That is a far nicer "indoor sport"! Thank God for life and opportunity and use them for yourself, for Him and for your fellow-man!

Have you ever sat down to think what you are here for? Have you ever asked God to give you a mission in the world? God never put you here merely to work for yourself. That is too small a job for one man or woman! You are here to aid in the development of God's world and God's people. Have you ever done anything to make the world better? Then, if you have not, you haven't fulfilled the end of your existence.



There is an old hymn somewhere that says:

*"I live for those that love me,  
For those I know are true,  
For the heaven that smiles above me,  
And the good that I can do."*

That hymn is all wrong except the last line! We live also for those who don't love us, who are not true, and we have got to go on living and working and helping even though the heaven doesn't shine above us but everything is black and forbidding.

Why should you and I have everything our own way? Why must everything be bright and pleasant for us or we won't play? Other people suffer. Why should we whine when suffering comes? Other people keep on working and helping when trouble comes, why should not we? Don't think so much of your own troubles,—think of someone's else. That is the best way to banish your own. You can still fight even if you are wounded! The "boys over there" had sometimes to be forced back to the dressing-stations to have their wounds attended to, and they would not go oftentimes until they were faint from loss of blood. They kept on fighting though they were wounded. If "it pleased God to make the captain of our salvation perfect through suffering," why should we object to the same process? He fought on though bleeding from many wounds. He would

not give up though all hell was fighting on the other side. And why? Because He knew that victory was assured! Because He knew that after the trial and stress and strain would come the victor's song!

That is the promise to you. Order the battle! Gather reinforcements around you by the very earnestness of your example! Never mind the trial, the hardship and the danger, for victory is assured. Gird yourself again for one more struggle. You never know when victory is coming. It is perhaps in the very next fight! Order the battle, therefore. Go into it with confidence and greatest expectation, and if you'll fight fairly and unselfishly, if you'll think as much of others as yourself, then you will fight better and win all the more quickly. Go into it this way, and the victory will soon be yours.

"Who shall order the battle? Thou!" Who shall win the victory? Thou!



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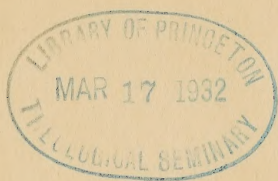
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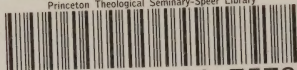








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